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Wednesday, 28 March 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Rutte/Mr. Van Oosterom/M goire Van Haaren .	(Netherlands)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Bakayoko
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Lemoyne
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Mukhtarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Magierowski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Baylan
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Baron Ahmad
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations

Letter dated 2 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/184)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations

Letter dated 2 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/184)

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Ministers and other representatives to the Security Council Chamber. Their presence here today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

I am also delighted to welcome our briefers: His Excellency the Secretary-General; His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Ms. Fatimata Touré, Director of Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action. Mr. Faki Mahamat is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Nouakchott.

Before each Council member is a list of speakers who have requested to participate in accordance with rules 37 and 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, as well as the previous practice of the Council in that regard. We propose that they be invited to participate in this meeting.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/184, which contains a letter dated 2 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

Recalling the Security Council's latest note of the President on its working methods (S/2017/507), I wish to encourage members of the Council to deliver their statements in five minutes or less. Note 507 also encourages briefers to be succinct and to focus on key issues. Briefers are further encouraged to limit their initial remarks to 15 minutes or less.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for organizing this important debate and I thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for presiding over it.

In the past year I have addressed the Council several times on peacekeeping reform. It is now time to take action together. At its best, United Nations peacekeeping is a remarkable enterprise of multilateralism and international solidarity. From Sierra Leone to Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Namibia, El Salvador and elsewhere, United Nations peacekeeping has helped countries move from war to peace and has supported the work of civil-society activists such as Ms. Fatimata Touré, who is with us today. In West Africa, for example, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire are now peaceful, thanks in part to the support of United Nations peacekeeping. It is inspiring to see Côte d'Ivoire represented here today in the Council. Three United Nations peacekeeping missions have completed their mandates and left after a job well done. That is our aim for every mission.

However, we all know that United Nations peacekeeping faces serious challenges, particularly in four of its largest deployments: Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan. Put simply, peace operations cannot succeed if they are deployed instead of a political solution rather than in support of one. United Nations peacekeeping missions now operate in far more dangerous, complex and high-risk environments. They are under threat from armed groups, criminals and terrorists who have access to powerful modern weapons. United Nations peacekeepers are often underequipped, underprepared and unready for the dangerous environments in which they now operate. There are gaps in command and control, culture, equipment and training. Peacekeepers are vulnerable and they are targeted for attack. Last year we lost 59 peacekeepers through malicious acts. That is a sharp increase over the figure for 2016, which was 34. I pay tribute to the fallen. We will never forget their sacrifice. Those figures are unacceptable and weigh on us all. That is why this year I will spend the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers in Mali, where our Mission sustained the

highest number of casualties of any operation last year. We are damaging the instrument of peacekeeping, and indeed multilateralism itself, by creating unrealistic expectations. Lives and our credibility are being lost.

Such challenges require strong collective action. We should focus our efforts on three areas: refocusing peacekeeping with realistic expectations; making peacekeeping missions stronger and safer; and mobilizing greater support for political solutions and for well-structured, well-equipped and well-trained forces. The Secretariat has set change in motion on the basis of the Security Council and General Assembly's resolutions on sustaining peace, the Cruz report and other reviews and reports over recent years. Today, and on a regular basis, I will provide Member States with a summary of the concrete actions that have been implemented and that are the responsibility of my Under-Secretaries-General for peacekeeping operations and field support. The documents will be available at the end of the meeting.

First, we are working to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers. We have already started to implement measures to improve the preparedness and response of missions at high risk by strengthening training, reviewing medical support and addressing performance issues.

Secondly, we are conducting independent reviews of peacekeeping missions aimed at refining their priorities and configuration, while assessing the viability of their mandates and political processes. The reviews are aimed at ensuring that we have well-trained and -equipped peacekeepers who are mobile and agile and can be proactive in dealing with challenges and threats. Too often in the past our troops have been reduced to waiting in a defensive position, giving hostile forces the time and space to plan attacks.

Thirdly, I have launched a new approach to sexual exploitation and abuse by ensuring that victims have a clear way to report allegations and by working with troop- and police-contributing countries to address allegations, end impunity and prevent future cases. I am encouraged that 90 countries have joined the compact on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. I have appointed a system-wide Victims' Rights Advocate, who works closely with Governments and civil society. A further four Victims' Rights Advocates now work in the peacekeeping missions where there have been the highest numbers of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. I have invited Heads of State and Government to join the Circle of Leadership, which is a visible and powerful symbol of our joint commitment to preventing and ending the scourge.

Fourthly, the reforms of the peace and security architecture should result in better analysis, stronger support to troop- and police-contributors, more effective political engagement and enhanced accountability and transparency, as requested by many Member States. The overall goal of the reforms is to improve our capacities to prevent conflict and to sustain peace.

Such efforts are critical. However, action by the Secretariat alone is not enough to meet the challenges that we face. Our chances of success increase dramatically when we work together with Member States and share the burdens, risks and responsibilities. We urgently need a quantum leap in collective engagement. That is why I am launching a new initiative, Action for Peacekeeping, aimed at mobilizing all partners and stakeholders to support the great enterprise of United Nations peacekeeping. As peacekeeping marks its seventieth anniversary, I hope that we can develop a set of mutually agreed principles and commitments for creating peacekeeping operations fit for the future. They will be formulated with all our partners, including at a high-level side event on the margins of the General Assembly in September, and I hope that we can reach a formal agreement by the end of the year. I thank the Netherlands and Côte d'Ivoire for moving this effort forward, and I encourage all Council members and all our partners for peace to join. As we build this agreement together, I have six immediate requests for Member States.

First, I urge Security Council members to sharpen and streamline mandates and put an end to mandates that look like Christmas trees. Christmas is over, and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan cannot possibly implement 209 mandated tasks. By attempting too much, we dilute our efforts and weaken our impact. I hope that our mission reviews will help to end this mandate inflation.

Secondly, I call on Member States to sustain their political engagement and push for political solutions and inclusive peace processes, including through bilateral diplomacy and sanctions, if necessary. A peacekeeping operation is not an army or a counter-terrorism force or a humanitarian agency. It is a tool for creating the space for a nationally owned political solution.

(*spoke in French*)

Thirdly, I ask the Council to continue building and strengthening partnerships with regional organizations. The African Union is one of our most important partners, and I thank the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, for being here with us today. Political partnerships are critical, particularly when a United Nations mission is deployed to support a peace process facilitated by other actors, as in South Sudan with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union. Operational partnerships with regional or subregional partners are vital to peace-enforcement and counter-terrorism missions when United Nations peacekeeping is not the right response. I encourage the Security Council to back these initiatives with strong mandates and predictable, sustained funding. Our partnership with the African Union in Somalia offers important lessons. The Group of Five for the Sahel presents similar advantages, and I urge Council members to give it their full support and all it needs to achieve success. Triangular partnerships among the Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat are also a vital part of reinforcing our support to peacekeeping.

Fourthly, I appeal to the peacekeeping leadership and personnel — civilian, military and police — to come ready to deliver. Caveats imposed by troop- and police-contributing countries should not hobble our operations. Special Representatives, Force Commanders and Police Commissioners must ensure a clear, functional and responsive chain of command and control, without interference. Troop- and police-contributing countries and their partners have a duty to improve the level of training and preparedness of peacekeepers. I am grateful all who contribute. I hope that they have seen our videos showcasing the dedication, service and sacrifice of the Blue Helmets from many different countries. However, we cannot continue as a patchwork of personnel, with varying approaches and mindsets. I welcome innovative arrangements, such as triangular partnerships between the United Nations, donors of equipment and training, and troop- and police-contributing countries. Thanks to such partnerships, we are able to equip and train troops better and more efficiently. United Nations peacekeepers must aim for the highest standards across the board.

Fifthly, I urge the Security Council to uphold its responsibility to align human and financial resources with mandates. I am totally committed to budgetary discipline and to optimizing peacekeeping resources. But arbitrary budget cuts undermine efforts to implement ambitious and comprehensive mandates. There have been more than 140 deaths in Mali since the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali was established in 2013. How can Blue Helmets operate in such an environment when they lack nearly 100 of the armored personnel carriers they need? How can our peacekeepers in the Central African Republic deploy to remote parts of the country without any of the ground-to-air communications equipment that they need?

In our peacekeeping operations overall, 15 field hospitals are either not deployed or not functioning. Many of the gaps are in the most hostile environments, including northern Mali. These shortfalls reduce mobility, medical support and communications capacity, and severely impair our peacekeepers' effectiveness and ability to actively prevent conflict and engage hostile forces. We also face critical shortages of appropriate personnel. The presence of women in our operations contributes directly to increase mission effectiveness and credibility, yet we have to repeatedly ask for more female military officers, soldiers and police personnel. We also need experienced leaders, skilled technicians, logistics and air assets, and specialized equipment, including intelligence capabilities.

Sixthly and finally, I call on host countries to give their full consent and active cooperation to peacekeeping operations. That includes holding the perpetrators of attacks on peacekeepers accountable and removing impediments to their full freedom of movement. If peacekeeping operations are to be successful, the parties to conflict must want peace and actively participate in a political process. When the will of host countries wavers, United Nations Member States, led by the Council, must use every possible incentive and their full influence to put the peace process back on track.

I believe that we all know what peacekeeping operations need to succeed. I count on the engagement and support of Council members in meeting our joint commitments.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Faki Mahamat.

Mr. Faki Mahamat (*spoke in French*): Today's meeting is a timely opportunity to discuss the future of peacekeeping at a moment when it is increasingly challenged. I thank the Dutch presidency of the Security Council for taking the initiative to convene this debate. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his efforts on behalf of the cause of peace and development in Africa.

The peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council are among the most powerful instruments available to the international community in promoting international peace and security. They exemplify the strong added value of multilateralism and symbolize international solidarity. Needless to say, Africa is profoundly attached to the principle of multilateralism and to the institutions that embody it. Faced with the complex and interlinked challenges that are confronting our planet, the multilateral approach is the only way to ensure lasting and effective responses.

Unilateralism is synonymous with egoism, especially at a time when humankind is in need of solidarity. It is of hollow utility because lasting solutions to the problems that call for our attention demand cooperation and consensus. It poses grave threats international stability. Everything must therefore be done to maintain and promote United Nations peacekeeping operations, of which almost half are deployed in Africa and contribute to reaching the goal of ridding the continent of the scourge of war by 2020.

The imperative need to strengthen the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations has been acknowledged by everyone. It is linked to the volatility of the environments in which such operations are deployed, as well as to the lack of tangible progress made in the political processes which they are supposed to support. In Africa, many examples attest to that dual-reality. The African Union is determined to fully execute the mission incumbent upon it so as to find suitable responses to those challenges. In that regard, I should like to share with the Council three key messages.

The first concerns the need to provide peacekeeping operations with the resources they require to carry out their mandates effectively. The times are undoubtedly inclined towards frugality, but the latter cannot be allowed to take priority over peace and the protection of civilians exposed to every kind of abuse, especially since the peacekeeping budget represents only a tiny fraction of what is spent worldwide on weapons.

My second message involves the need for close cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union so as to move forward the political processes underpinning peacekeeping operations. It is clear that, in the absence of such political processes, peacekeeping runs the risk of becoming enmired. The response to such difficulties cannot be allowed to result in the international community's disengagement or a decrease in its involvement. Unfortunately, resolving political issues is often a long-term endeavour. The mere presence of a peacekeeping operation has a stabilizing effect. It would be morally and politically unacceptable to jeopardize such benefits. The complex nature of political processes clearly highlights the need to redouble efforts to overcome obstacles. From that perspective, it is crucial to strengthen the close partnership between the African Union and the United Nations to a greater degree, in the spirit of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security signed in April 2017.

That joint effort must be guided on two levels. With regard to relations between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, the agreed modalities of cooperation between the two organizations must be translated more effectively into action, including through joint visits on the ground and coordinating the messages sent to parties in conflict. More generally, it is important for the Security Council to give due consideration to the views of the African Union on issues of linking justice to the search for peace, matters of inclusivity and other relevant questions, while respecting African ownership. With regard to the relationship between the African Union Commission and the Secretariat, in addition to what is already under way, we need to increase the number of joint visits on the ground — including those at the highest level — to consider sending, whenever possible, joint representatives, and promote common positions.

My third message concerns the need for complementarity between United Nations operations and African Union missions. United Nations operations are supposed to be deployed when minimum conditions are met to enable the maintenance of peace once it is restored. African Union missions are deployed in situations that continue to be marked by violence. The African Union and its regional mechanisms have shown

their determination to take risks on the ground to accelerate the achievement of peace. The African Union Mission in Somalia and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel attest to that commitment. But as the Council is aware, those missions face financial and logistical difficulties that undermine their ability to carry out their mandate. I can only reiterate here our appeal to the Security Council to adopt the measures that we expect of it in favour of sustainable and predictabe financing for the peace support operations that it has mandated, while bearing in mind its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Hesitation and procrastination are no longer the order of the day.

Peacekeeping is at a crossroads. This form of collective action has achieved remarkable results that we should all be proud of, but many challenges lie before us. I reiterate the commitment of the African Union to working with other members of the international community to improve the effectiveness of that irreplaceable tool of the multilateral system. Regardless of the legitimate criticism sometimes levelled at peacekeeping operations, we must take care not to throw out the baby with the bath water out of overzealousness.

The President: I thank Mr. Mahamat for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Touré.

Ms. Touré (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the people of the region of Gao in the northern part of my country, whom I am representing at this table in this debate, allow me to convey my profound gratitude to you, Mr. President, and through you, to your country, the Netherlands, for providing me with this rare opportunity to address the Security Council and talk about the security situation that the northern region of my country is undergoing on a daily basis. Although the members of the Council are already aware of the situation, they need to be informed of certain facts that may have escaped the Council's attention.

My name is Fatimata Touré. I was born on 27 February 1961 in the Gao region, which is one of the five northern regions of Mali. I was lucky to be able to go to school, and of my generation only 10 women had the chance to pursue a post-secondary education. We had the highest percentage of women managers in the Gao region. Following my post-secondary education, I knew that the best thing I could do was to go home. I returned to Gao. Together with other women leaders, I created the Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action, the main role of which is to promote the political emergence of women and protect the rights of women and children.

The Council should remember me as a living witness to the events that took place from 1990 to the present day. It is with deep emotion that testify. The 1990 rebellion was incredibly atrocious. Since that rebellion, which was ended by the Tamanrasset Accord and the national agreement, the northern regions of Mali have experienced no real peace to this very day, as I address the Council.

The security situation has always been characterized by looting, vehicle theft, kidnappings, rape and armed robbery. We have reached the point where ambulances are being attacked, patients are forced off and the ambulances are taken away. Humanitarian staff cannot work, drivers cannot work, and women who travel to work in the weekly markets as a way to provide for their daily needs can no longer do so. When they travel, either their vehicles explode on mines and they lose their hands and feet, or they are stopped, stripped of everything they have and raped. They are now forced to confine themselves to their homes, even though they are the heads of their families.

Why is it necessary to deploy a peacekeeping mission in the northern regions of Mali? A peacekeeping mission is imperative because of the resurgence of rebellion, because the Malian State is incapable of ensuring the safety of its population and property, and because the conflict runs the risk of unleashing national implosion and subregional, perhaps even international destabilization. The conflict in northern Mali impacts all neighbouring countries, notably Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and the Niger, and it will certainly affect other countries as well.

With regard to the conflict in northern Mali, the rebellion of 2012 was the most catastrophic because it was the first that was characterized by kidnappings and gang rape. It claimed 70 per cent of Mali's territory, which was occupied for 10 months. During that period, there were no social services and, the independence fighters having been driven out, the Islamist rebels made the law, carrying out amputations, floggings and a host of other such practices. We therefore have a real need for this peacekeeping mission to provide solutions to the various problems I have just mentioned.

What about this peace mission? Its core mandate is centred around two points. There are other points that are not of interest to us beyond the two main ones. The first is support for the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process. Where is that support? Everyone knows that the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is handicapped. The situation remains unchanged, and even if it has changed it has not had a direct impact on the population because it is not a concern of the people.

Within the framework of implementing the Agreement, 26 structures need to be established. However, to date only eight have been set up. I note that women represent only 3 per cent of the staff of the structures in place, though that is not what we are concerned with. It is true that the rate of representation of women is very low in the operationalization of those structures, but that is not what interests us. What does interest us is the need for the peacekeeping mission to accompany the political process. Under the political process, the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement provides for the establishment of regional councils that are directly elected by universal suffrage and include broad executive and administrative powers. If those measures are taken, almost all of our security problems will be solved.

The Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation stipulates the establishment of a territorial police force. The decision to create that force was to be followed by a transitional period of three months. Three years have passed, and the territorial police force has not been created. It could have been helping us to ensure our safety in that time.

I would like to return to the widespread insecurity because it has a direct impact on the lives of our communities and prevents us from working, breathing and moving around every day. As I speak, poor citizens are being attacked and killed at close range, with total impunity. Indeed, no investigations or prosecutions are conducted, negotiations and nothing is done to punish the perpetrators of the mass killings committed in the heart of Gao or Timbuktu. Those acts are committed with impunity and wreak havoc on the lives of our communities. We are sick of it and heartsore. The distress we suffer as a result of how we are treated on a daily basis by the various armed groups runs deep.

With respect to the mandate of the peacekeeping mission, we have also learned things that have helped us a great deal. For example, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process includes a security sector reform component, which directly addresses communities. Based on that process, new community violence reduction projects have been implemented in the various at-risk communities. Those efforts are therefore helping to reduce the risk of insecurity in those areas, and that is truly alleviating the suffering of the people. Sums of nearly $5,000 dollars are being made available to the communities, which are then being used it to relieve suffering. With the DDR component, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is entering areas restricted to others, where water supply problems alone can result in the deaths of people and animals. There really are parts that have been quite successful. Additionally, in the Department of Public Affairs, there is a component for quick-impact projects, in which $50,000 has been allocated to populations. They have worked quite well in those areas.

Indeed, as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission has said, the mere presence of MINUSMA headquarters in the Gao region, with which I am most familiar, has helped to reduce youth unemployment. We need to talk about that issue. Many young people have found jobs. Even some who have no qualifications find resources that enable them to ensure the survival of their population. So it really is a very important stabilization measure for us. I am convinced that if MINUSMA were asked to pack its bags today, the young people from those areas would leave as well.

With regard to the mandate for the protection of civilians and for stabilization, to be frank we are waiting for that mandate to be carried out. It is awaited simply because no one has yet felt that MINUSMA is protecting civilians, nor has there been any sense of stabilization. People are completely dissatisfied and even have the impression that they have been left behind, abandoned. There is no protection. Every day they are attacked, beaten, killed or humiliated. No one steps in; there has been no intervention. And this is happening right under the nose of MINUSMA, even though protecting civilians and promoting stability are part of its mandate.

What are the sociohistorical facts of the rebellion in northern Mali that have hampered or will hamper MINUSMA's mandate? First, the area is isolated, and more importantly, it is far from large centres, which generates a common sense of marginalization from any

administration. That disrupts the socioeconomic and political life of those regions. Then there is the size of the area. The northern regions represent 75 per cent of the national territory, with a population density of five inhabitants per square kilometre. There is the additional hardship of a hostile climate — 45°C to 50°C in the shade in April, a hot and dry climate with accelerated desertification, and with violence that exacerbates the suffering and misery of the people living there.

There is also the mistrust among various groups, born in the rebellion of the 1990s, which encouraged everyone to arm themselves with means of self-defence and which cultivated strong agendas that very often lead to unfortunate events and violence that are harmful to culture. Conflicts have been turned into communal strife — no incident between two individuals of different groups is seen in an ideal framework, but is rather seen through the prism of prejudice inspired by the spirit of retaliation or retribution.

Another factor is the complex and multidimensional nature of the causes of conflict — historical, political, economic and sociocultural, internal and external. And the interests of the actors involved are divergent and irreconcilable. I do not have to tell Council members what they already know. There are three types of actors, three types of rebels in the northern regions. There are those called independence fighters, who want to secure the independence of their territories, such as the members of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, who fight with great conviction. There are those called jihadists, some of whom, despite what one might think, also fight with great conviction because they believe they need Sharia law to move things forward. The third group is the drug traffickers, who are the enemies of peace. They are the most powerful because they are economically and politically robust. They control the local economy and, what is more, they do not want peace, because they are not interested in tranquillity. They only want to secure the drug-trafficking corridors. They are present in all spheres of the Malian Administration, with representatives at the highest levels.

All of those factors obstruct MINUSMA's mission in the northern region.

What do the people expect from MINUSMA's mandate? MINUSMA's mandate to protect civilians must be tailored to our needs — security needs, economic needs, sociocultural needs — and to the situation in the northern regions. To anticipate or counter those threats, the mandate will need to be robust. There has already been reference to a robust mandate in one of the recent resolutions. But there is no difference between the time when the mandate was not robust and the moment that it became robust. It must therefore be made much more robust. We must also bolster rapid early-warning capabilities by further involving citizens, especially in areas where civilians are constantly at risk, such as in the northern regions of Mali.

I thank the Council for its attention and, more importantly, for giving me the opportunity to present the security situation in the northern regions.

The President: I thank Ms. Touré for her briefing.

I will now make a statement in my capacity as Prime Minister of the Netherlands.

First of all, I would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres, Moussa Faki Mahamat and Fatimata Touré for their inspiring contributions.

United Nations peacekeeping operations save lives. For many men, women and children in conflict areas, the United Nations is their last hope. And sadly, more and more people around the world have only that last hope to cling to. Since 2010, the number of major violent conflicts has tripled. They have also become more complex.

The history of peacekeeping operations has seen notable achievements, but it also has its dark pages. We in the Netherlands know that all too well. But that does not make us want to look away. On the contrary, modernizing and improving United Nations peacekeeping operations is one of the priorities of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We fully support the Secretary-General's efforts in that regard.

That brings me to my main message today: we need to shoulder our responsibilities. That applies to us all, first and foremost to the Security Council. We must establish clear and focused mandates and put pressure on parties to conflicts to find a political solution. It also applies to host countries, which must cooperate fully with missions. It applies to the Secretariat, which must support missions efficiently and effectively. And last but not least, it applies to all Member States because we are the United Nations, and we must make sure that sufficient funding, political support and well-trained, disciplined and well-equipped troops are always available.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is shouldering its responsibility. We are a big financial donor, we make an innovative contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and we contribute to missions in South Sudan and the Middle East. We want more effective and flexible missions. But how do we achieve that? Let me highlight a few specific points.

First, good intelligence is one of the keys to a successful mission. Together with other countries, the Netherlands has developed a new intelligence capability in Mali. The United Nations mandate can thus be carried out more effectively, and civilians and peacekeepers can be better protected.

Secondly, capabilities like helicopters and medical facilities are vital, but scarce. Norway was the first country to set up a rotation scheme for this. After the Netherlands and then Germany supplied helicopters in Gao, Canada recently announced that it would take up the baton. That is great news. Rotation schemes lower the threshold for participation in missions, increase their sustainability and improve their quality.

Thirdly, I would like to stress the importance of an integrated approach within United Nations missions. Each mission must have an overall strategy, with benchmarks, and I am delighted that such a strategy will be put in place for MINUSMA.

Finally, the United Nations is working more with regional partners, such as the African Union and the European Union. It is good news that organizations like the African Union and the G5 Sahel are assuming their responsibility.

Those are only a few of the many improvements, big and small, being made. We will continue to press for modernization of United Nations peace missions during our membership in the Security Council and beyond. I hope that today will spark greater commitment to making peace operations more effective so that the United Nations can go on making a difference to the lives of millions of men, women and children around the world.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the Minister of State and Minister of Defence of Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Bakayoko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the welcome initiative to convene this high-level debate on collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

I wish to convey the gratitude of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellence Mr. Alassane Ouattara, to the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. Mark Rutte, for his kind invitation to participate in this high-level debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, and I wish to assure him of Côte d'Ivoire's full support for the initiatives to make United Nations peacekeeping operations a tool to respond to present-day challenges to conflict prevention and consolidation of peace in the world.

I speak to this gathering in my capacity as Minister of State and Minister of Defence of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, but also as an Ivoirian citizen, bearing witness to the effectiveness of a United Nations peacekeeping operations in protecting and saving human lives. Indeed, I personally benefited from the protection provided by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, which, as was the case for thousands of fellow compatriots, saved my life. My delegation also includes Ambassador Alcide Djédjé, a member of the opposing camp at the time of the Ivoirian crisis, who also benefited from the same protection. Together we are here, together we are engaged in a national reconstruction process that has enabled our country to be elected as non-permanent member of the Security Council and to be ready to send troops to theatres of operations to save other lives.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are taking place in increasingly challenging environments, characterized by asymmetrical attacks against peacekeepers and civilians. United Nations peacekeeping missions need to shoulder, in addition to the protection of civilians, their support role for the political processes of crises resolution and peacebuilding. Here, I would like to commend the initiatives of nearly 110,000 men and women deployed in those missions, who are working to avoid tragedies, and I wish to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets who, every day, sacrifice their lives for peace in the world.

We are debating improvements to United Nations peacekeeping operations. In that context, it is incumbent upon the Security Council, on the basis of rigorous analyses of environmental and operational constraints, to provide peacekeeping operations with robust

mandates, setting clear and achievable goals. For it is clear that peacekeeping missions sometimes experience difficulties in agreeing on the precise meaning of the restrictions imposed by the mandates and in translating overall concepts and strategies into action.

Furthermore, these mandates must be flexible and sequenced so that mission priorities can be progressively adapted to developments in the sociopolitical and security context in the host country. In addition, prior to deployment, it is the duty of troop-contributing countries to ensure adequate training for their contingents, in accordance with the United Nations Standards of Conduct and to make available equipment that has been adapted to the needs on the ground. Within that framework, and in support of the troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat, the Security Council and donors need to further combine their efforts to reinforce the capabilities of the troops, particularly with regard to intelligence, thus enabling them to anticipate attacks on civilians and United Nations contingents.

My country welcomes the opportunity afforded to us once again to share its experience on this important matter. Côte d'Ivoire, at the cost of many sacrifices and with the help of the international community, managed to emerge from more than a decade of instability. While it is true that the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the ongoing security sector reform received the greatest media coverage in the emergence from the crisis, other important aspects have also contributed. They include support for the electoral process, securing the territory and help in rebuilding governing bodies.

This experience of my country allows me to recall before the Security Council that United Nations peacekeeping operations, such as the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, have a number of stages, all equally important, and they are organized methodologically to achieve the goals set. In Côte d'Ivoire one can cite as examples the most important stages: a political agreement prior to the deployment of the United Nations operation; a sanctions regime, including an embargo against arms and diamonds and individual sanctions; the authorization to use force to destroy heavy weapons; and respect for the political agreement and for the result of United Nations-certified elections. The latter — the certification of the results by the United Nations — was decisive for the credibility to the electoral process.

However, not all operations always align with that successful scheme, and some even face serious failures or drag on and on. That prompts us today to seriously reconsider their mode of operation through a courageous reform initiative. To that end, my delegation would like to draw attention to three conditions essential to the success of such missions. First is prevention, which must be dealt with as a genuine priority, one likely to lower tensions. Next, clarity of the mandate and the appropriate means for its implementation should ensure better protection of civilians. That protection of civilians is the essence of peacekeeping operations and requires consideration of the rules of engagement of forces. The third condition is the need for exemplary cooperation between the United Nation system and the Government in power.

As this high-level debate is being held, my country remains concerned by the crises that persist on our continent — in Mali, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the Central African Republic, in South Sudan, in Darfur — or elsewhere in the world, and that despite the presence of Blue Helmets. The persistence of those crises challenges us and calls on us to join our efforts to return to peace and stability in those hard-hit countries. That is why our collective action in support of peacekeeping operations must get away from the partitioning of duties and build on coherence and coordination among the Secretariat, the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and multilateral partners. We must also bear in mind that collective action will be effective only if it is based on full awareness and acceptance, on the part of each party involved, of their individual responsibility and their duty to cooperate with other peacekeeping actors.

Finally, although it is important to ensure the viability of peacekeeping operations through sustainable funding mechanisms, we believe that it is also vital to include the gender dimension in strategic management of forces.

Today's Council meeting is surely the start of a series of initiatives put forward by the Secretary-General, based on the concept of collective responsibility, that seeks to infuse a new dynamic into United Nations peacekeeping operations. Because of its experience, Cote d'Ivoire is aware of the importance of a peacekeeping mission and would like, through my voice, to reiterate its support and readiness to help the Secretary-General in the implementation of this ambitious endeavour.

I cannot conclude without conveying my Government's gratitude to Member States who contribute to peacekeeping operations. I would like to echo the Secretary-General's call for a revitalization of the framework for cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union and for the Security Council to strengthen is support for financing African Union forces deployed on the continent.

Mr. Baylan (Sweden): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and especially Ms. Fatimata Touré for their very strong testimony to what this all about. Let me also thank you, Mr. President, for offering a platform for today's discussion.

I align myself with the statement to be delivered later today on behalf of the Nordic countries.

Never has the world been in greater need of effective peacekeeping, and never have the challenges peacekeepers encounter been more complex or more immense. Consequently, it has never been more important for United Nations peace operations to be optimally configured to deliver for peace and security and to meet today's challenges.

In recent years, important and thorough reviews have been conducted, seeking to adapt United Nations peace operations in light of changing conflict dynamics and limited resources. Yet progress on implementation has been limited. We welcome renewed efforts, spearheaded by the Secretary-General, to strengthen global partnerships for peacekeeping and to move from policy to practice and from words to action. We need more action. Otherwise, we will not make peace operations fit for the twenty-first century.

We must strive to ensure that the United Nations as a whole is able to engage early, flexibly and effectively across the conflict spectrum. That is essential if we are to deliver on our ultimate goal of peace, security and sustainable development. Therefore, Sweden stands firmly behind the Secretary-General's reform agenda, putting prevention and sustaining peace at the heart of our efforts. Peacekeeping is one of the instruments available in that regard, and effective and efficient peacekeeping can reduce the human suffering costs and save resources in the long run. Our guiding principle must be to make the most possible difference on the ground.

Like the Netherlands, Sweden has a long and broad history in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Since 1948, when the first observers were sent to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, more than 80,000 Swedish women and men have participated in United Nations peace operations. Sweden currently deploys about 350 military, police, correction officers and civilians to United Nations peacekeeping and contributes approximately $70 million to peacekeeping operations per year.

In 2014, Sweden reinforced its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping through its contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Drawing on that experience, I would like to raise three points in particular that we believe would contribute to more effective peacekeeping.

First, let us ensure that we can make informed decisions. The purpose of today's debate is to clarify the responsibilities of each and every actor involved in peacekeeping. To assume those responsibilities and make informed decisions, we need the relevant facts. The Security Council should be provided, ahead of mandate renewals, with information on options and trade-offs between mission tasks, costs, safety and security and resources and on significant changes in operational environments.

We always need to apply a gender perspective and a whole-of-mission approach and make sure that gender-disaggregated data is available. Integrated analysis should also guide the force generation process. Reporting on risks and under-performance, in particular as related to the protection of civilians, must be coherent and systematic. We need to encourage and find models for frank dialogue in that regard, bringing together all the relevant actors.

Secondly, visions and mandates must be translated into results on the ground. Peace operations must be integrated and fit for purpose. Three aspects are particularly important in that regard: situational awareness, adequate leadership and the performance of troops.

In our own experience with MINUSMA, peacekeeping intelligence is vital to ensure informed decisions and operational planning, as the President highlighted. Joint analysis and information-sharing must be systematized from the outset of a mission in order to contribute to more effective protection of

civilians and of United Nations personnel. It is also crucial that missions are able and ready to act on the information and early warnings they receive.

That brings me to the issue of leadership. The Secretary-General's reform agenda foresees greater delegation of authority to the field. That, together with the multidimensional nature of peace operations, requires well-prepared and cohesive leadership with clarity of roles in crisis management situations. Current selection processes for senior mission leadership should be reviewed and the joint training of management teams enhanced, encompassing both civilian and military staff, and also police components.

The legitimacy of peacekeeping depends on the performance and accountability of troops. We all have responsibilities in that regard. Uniformed units must have the right training, skills and equipment to be able to protect civilians and themselves and to deliver on mandates in accordance with applicable law. To achieve that, we need to hold troop-contributing countries accountable, support capacity-building with mobile training teams and focus on training Headquarters staff and on the selection of qualified staff officers.

The sexual exploitation and abuse of the most vulnerable people by those sent to protect them is a despicable act. We strongly support ongoing efforts to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse within the United Nations system. However, more can and must be done, including ensuring that all perpetrators are held to account. The Secretary-General's proposed measures must now be properly implemented so that zero tolerance of sexual harassment becomes a reality. That is crucial to maintaining the legitimacy of peacekeeping.

Thirdly, peace is best pursued in partnership. With regional organizations actively engaged in political processes and security efforts in United Nations mission settings, strategic coherence is a prerequisite for success. Our interventions should be based on a joint political strategy that clarifies roles, end states and mandates. Training and capacity-building, counter-terrorism operations, and the fight against human trafficking and organized crime also need to be part of the dialogue with partners.

In addition, frank discussions should characterize our relations with host nations, before and during the deployment of missions. We need the political will to be open and transparent on mission performance, and the courage to continuously ask ourselves how we can do better and to act when we can.

Let me end on a positive note. Even if there are many challenges ahead of us that can be solved only by all of us together — the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries and host nations — we have seen successes in peacekeeping missions. The United Nations Mission in Liberia, which is closing after 15 years, is a powerful example of the positive contribution that peacekeeping can bring by supporting national efforts to build sustainable peace and stability. Careful and early planning for the transition across the whole of the United Nations, including through the Peacebuilding Commission, has also laid the foundation for those gains to be sustained into the future. A long-term commitment and adequate support and funding are needed to ensure that this is possible. We must learn from those kinds of success stories.

Former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld once said:

> "The concept of loyalty is distorted when it is understood to mean blind acceptance. It is correctly interpreted when it is assumed to cover honest criticism."

That is our main message today. Our loyalty to and trust in United Nations peacekeeping remains firm, but our loyalty also requires us to continue to critically assess and review our respective roles and responsibilities. We must move from talk to action.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for being at this meeting and for his commitment to peacekeeping. I also thank Chairperson Mahamat for his briefing, and I have to tell Ms. Touré that her advocacy and passion and the way she fights for the people is to be admired. It is inspiring, but it is to be listened to. She spoke of many truths today, and I think that we need to make sure that when those truths are spoken, they are acknowledged. It takes courage to say those truths and we should not let that courage fall by the wayside. We need to honour that courage by responding, and so I thank her for her honesty. I would also like to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for coming to preside over this important meeting on the future of United Nations peacekeeping.

Around the world, the Blue Helmet is the most instantly recognizable symbol of this Organization's mission. We send peacekeepers to take on some of the

world's toughest challenges: protecting defenceless civilians, separating warring parties and helping to build State institutions where the rule of law is nowhere to be found. The Charter of the United Nations makes no mention of peacekeeping. No one thought of those kinds of missions when the Security Council first met, but when given an appropriate mandate and when properly managed and equipped, no one doubts that those missions can play an essential role in supporting peace and saving lives. That is why peacekeeping reform remains a top priority for the United States.

When I arrived here, we laid out a few principles that continue to guide our approach. Peacekeeping missions need to support political solutions. They need host country cooperation. Mandates must be realistic and achievable. Missions need to have an exit strategy. And we need to be willing to change mandates when things are not working. Those principles do not reflect the narrow interest of a single Member State, but rather we should all agree that they can improve peacekeeping across the board.

Every time the United States has looked at a peacekeeping mandate, we have gone back to those principles. We believe that missions are changing for the better. Missions are becoming more effective and more efficient. We reconfigured the Mission in Haiti to focus on police and the rule of law. We changed the mission in Darfur and downsized it to reflect current political and security realities. We have supported responsible drawdowns of peacekeeping missions, most recently in Liberia, while pushing peacekeepers in Lebanon to actually use all of their mandated authorities to be more effective in carrying out their tasks.

Yet, we still have a lot to do. A prime example is in Mali, where the Mission struggles to protect itself from terrorist attacks that have made that Mission the most dangerous peacekeeping assignment in the world. We have a responsibility to make that mandate realistic and achievable. However, when a mandate is no longer realistic or achievable, we need to change it and focus on addressing the most pressing priorities. When a Government stands in the way of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, we need to put real pressure on the Government to change course. When a mission no longer support a political solution, we need to get the parties back to the table or ask ourselves: Should the mission be there at all?

The United States strongly believes that we need robust performance standards and data-driven analysis on the performance of peacekeepers. The United States encourages the Secretariat to develop and implement a comprehensive performance policy that identifies clear standards, evaluates the performance of all personnel and includes measures to ensure accountability when those standards fall short. We need to develop a culture of performance when it comes to the peacekeeping operations at the United Nations. The people the United Nations serves deserve to know that when Blue Helmets arrive, they are qualified, appropriately equipped and ready to perform their duty.

As part of that effort, we must intensify our work to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping. The Secretary-General took positive action to address abuses in the Central African Republic, but that behaviour is still happening. There can be no excuses. We encourage the full use of resolution 2272 (2016) authorities to end the culture of impunity, including in responding to allegations concerning the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. All Member States need to support the Secretary-General when he takes action to make sure that peacekeepers meet the highest standards of conduct.

Resources are important for peacekeeping, of course. The United States has long been the largest financial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping by far. That will not change, but peacekeeping is a shared responsibility. With shared responsibility comes shared burdens and shared cost. One country should not shoulder more than one quarter of the United Nations peacekeeping budget, and we look forward to a more equitable distribution of the budget among Member States.

Moving forward, the United States will not pay more than 25 per cent of the peacekeeping budget. That is a cap required by United States law. We pledge to work with Member States and the Organization to ensure we make that adjustment in a fair and sensible manner that protects United Nations peacekeeping. All of us have a role to play and all of us must step up. The Security Council, the Secretariat, regional organizations, such as the African Union, troop- and police-contributors and host Governments have to work together.

As we move forward, we need to always remember why we deploy peacekeeping missions in the first place. We send peacekeepers to the front line to help those who have been victims of war and who have often experienced unimaginable atrocities. If we think about the people whom peacekeepers are meant to serve and keep them at the forefront of our minds, none of us should hesitate to do our part to make peacekeeping as effective as it can be.

Mr. Magierowski (Poland): I would first like to express my gratitude to the Netherlands and to Prime Minister Mark Rutte personally for holding today's debate, and to the Secretary-General for his valuable remarks. I would also like to thank Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their comprehensive, informative and passionate briefings.

I would like to recall the Secretary-General's words from last April, when he said in this very Chamber that the objective of every peacekeeping mission is "to set the stage for stability and sustainable peace" (*S/PV.7918, p. 2*). In the light of this, we must act together to make the process of improving peacekeeping operations more coherent and effective, which will enable us to lay solid and inclusive foundations for sustainable peace in the whole world. Poland has always been a strong supporter of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We regard them as an important tool of the international community for preserving global peace and security. However, today's security challenges require an all-of-United Nations approach and the use of all available means. I want to reiterate at this point that Poland supports all efforts aimed at strengthening mediation and preventive diplomacy, resolving disputes peacefully and addressing the root causes of conflicts. I would now like to concentrate on four issues that should guide us in our work in the Security Council this year.

First, we are now witnessing changes in the global geopolitical architecture that significantly affect the nature of conflicts and consequently that of United Nations peacekeeping missions. It should therefore be obvious that United Nations peacekeeping operations evolve and that new missions need mandates that are considerably different from those of decades ago. We need to respond to new challenges by encouraging ourselves, as Security Council members, to formulate realistic, tailor-made and context-specific mandates based on deep and comprehensive needs analysis on the ground. That should include constant monitoring of human rights as well as security situations. Mission mandates therefore have to recognize the primacy of politics in the entire peace process and provide a vision of the desired final outcome of a mission. The role of the Security Council in that process is essential.

Secondly, the role of peacekeeping in the protection of civilians is crucial. Poland attaches enormous importance to this issue. The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) rightly pointed out that the principles of peacekeeping should never be used as an excuse for failure to protect civilians. We have already heard too many excuses for inaction, and they were in fact inexcusable. The protection of civilians remains a very high priority issue for Poland, which is why we have acceded to the Kigali Principles and why we call on Member States, including all the troop- and police-contributing countries, to endorse them. In that regard, we would like to stress the importance of full respect for international law and international humanitarian law, which is a fundamental priority for my country. Impunity is unacceptable, and we must therefore reiterate that every perpetrator should be brought to justice. We also call for strict implementation of the zero-tolerance policy on acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and condemn any such acts committed by peacekeeping personnel.

Thirdly, Poland considers peacekeepers' security crucial. That includes not only troops but all humanitarian and support personnel in missions. The report by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz has triggered a long-awaited discussion on the current state of play with regard to the security of United Nations peacekeepers. The effective implementation of the post-report recommendations will require the full cooperation and unwavering efforts of all parties involved, including the Secretariat, the troop- and police-contributing countries and the Security Council.

Finally, insufficient and ineffective training of peacekeepers directly affects their performance in protecting civilians and the security of a mission's personnel. There can be no proper response without an adequate preparedness process. Peacekeepers' training cycles should equip the Blue Helmets with a clear vision of a given mission's priorities. Poland is committed to ensuring support in that area. We offer our training capacities and are open to cooperation with other States Members of the United Nations in enhancing peacekeepers' skills.

We should not forget the regional dimension of the security environment in which United Nations peacekeepers operate. They are deployed within living communities and troubled societies. If they are to even stand a chance of protecting endangered civilians, they need strong partnerships with host nations and local and regional actors in the area.

The Security Council should undertake all possible efforts and make the most of its mandate to improve the effectiveness of peace operations, as they play a crucial role in building the foundations for sustainable peace. I would like to conclude by quoting the Secretary-General once again.

> "Peace operations are at a crossroads. Our task is to keep them relevant with clear and achievable mandates, and the right strategies and support. Success depends on our collective efforts." (*ibid., p. 4*)

Mr. Mukhtarov (Kazakhstan) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to thank the presidency of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for organizing today's debate on a very important issue. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, as well as to Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Ms. Fatimata Touré, the Director of Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action, for their very informative and inspiring briefings.

While peacekeeping operations have fostered peace and stability in many areas of conflict, some missions have been going on for decades as a result of a lack of political solutions. Peacekeeping missions carry out their activities in conditions where the local power structures are unable to fully ensure security. Asymmetric threats are growing and peacekeepers are becoming targets for attacks. Since 2000, many reports have been issued on improving United Nations peacekeeping, including three in 2015 that made specific recommendations.

While changes have been introduced into peacekeeping, the number of deaths has increased, especially in five of the largest United Nations missions in Africa. All of that shows that conflicts, especially protracted ones, need a collective approach and efforts to improve peacekeeping operations conducted through the joint actions of all interested parties. In that regard, through analysis of the measures and processes undertaken by the United Nations in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, we would like to share with the Council the following observations and conclusions, which are based on our approaches and our colleagues' experience within the framework of Kazakhstan's examination of the practical aspects of deploying military contingents to peacekeeping operations.

To begin with, finding solutions to today's problems of security and development requires a comprehensive, three-pronged approach, whose main elements are, first, the interconnectedness of security and development. We firmly believe that if we are to achieve long-term peace and security, we must also implement programmes designed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at the same time. We also need a regional approach to dealing with cross-border challenges and threats rather than the more frequently applied narrow, country-specific approach, since solutions to current problems are not to be found within the borders of a single State. Then there is the principle of one United Nations, with greater coordination, streamlining and efficiency at Headquarters and in the field. We must avoid the excessive fragmentation of programmes and projects, combining the efforts of the various parts of United Nations programmes in order to implement steps towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Secondly, peacekeeping operations must strictly abide by the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and all new proposals and conditions must be carefully reviewed by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Thirdly, since peacekeeping operations today reflect the issues present in a very complex security environment, we must focus on ensuring cooperation among all States Members of the United Nations by building trust among the permanent members of the Security Council in order to harness all available mechanisms. Through increased cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and the effective division of responsibilities, we can improve overall efficiency.

Fourthly, peacekeeping operations need clearly defined mandates, objectives, command structures and adequate resources based on realistic assessments of the situation and long-term sustainable financing. We need fresh approaches that are practical, achievable and realistic. That demands increased situational awareness

with the potential for rapid responses in combating asymmetrical challenges and threats.

Fifthly, since peacekeeping contingents are not appropriate mechanisms for counter-terrorism operations, we want to point out that regional forces are generally better able to combat terrorist groups, as many such cases have shown. At the same time, United Nations peacekeepers must maintain their strictly defined role should they be jointly deployed with regional forces.

Lastly, developing a culture of peace should be a priority for all peacekeeping operations, as well as for the United Nations system, country teams on the ground, international partners, the local media and civil society. The participation of women in all stages and at all levels of our peacekeeping activities will make them more effective. We should also make creative and innovative use of social media and digital technology for more effective leadership, as well as in combating violent extremism and gender-based violence.

Modern conflicts are so complex that peacekeeping operations alone cannot resolve them. In that context, the key to the success of our actions includes thoroughly analysing the key causes of conflict, investing in development, combating climate change and addressing food insecurity and water and energy shortages. Such an approach can help to develop an effective plan of action for establishing and strengthening peace. In other words, the key to success lies in eradicating the drivers of instability, not just managing its symptoms.

Mr. Lemoyne (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like first to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's debate. I believe that your contribution and those of the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action serve as an effective guide for us on the path of the reforms that have been boldly launched.

France would like to pay heartfelt tribute to Peter, a Netherlander in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); Aïchatou, a Nigerian, also in MINUSMA; Ratih, an Indonesian in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; and Luis, a Chilean in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. They are among the 100,000 soldiers, police and civilians who risk their lives every day in peacekeeping operations, protecting tens of millions of people around the world. Above all, their Blue Helmets are more than ever an embodiment of the United Nations. They are a beacon of hope, as Mr. Bakayoko saw for himself. I would also like to pay tribute to the memory of the approximately 3,700 peacekeepers who have died in the line of duty, including 113 of my compatriots. Their sacrifice in the service of peace will never be forgotten. And if I may, Mr. President, at a time when the entire French nation is applauding the heroism of Lieutenant Colonel Beltrame, I would like to include him in my tribute to those who give their lives so that others may live and survive.

Member States will understand why France will always remain committed to efforts to improve peacekeeping operations with steadfast resolve and conviction. Because those operations are inseparable from the founding principles of the United Nations, it is our collective credibility that is at stake. These reform efforts should strengthen the effectiveness of peacekeeping. The aim is of course to help to settle conflicts by political means in increasingly complex contexts, to protect civilians who are victims of conflict, violence and massive violations of human rights and, in short, to build collective action with Members of the United Nations in the service of peace and security.

As the Secretary-General emphasized, and I commend his vision and determination, that is a complex and difficult but crucial undertaking. If we consider the examples of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Timor-Leste, it can succeed. However, at times it faces new political and security challenges in tackling asymmetrical threats. Needless to say, in the light of that, we must reflect and, above all, act. Peacekeeping operations are our common good. That is why, together with all those present, we would like to inspire a new ambition.

In order to achieve that, I believe that we must first reaffirm the cardinal principle that peacekeeping is a tool for achieving the political goal of peace. Peacekeeping operations must be part of that political horizon. The local, regional and multilateral stakeholders involved frequently lead those political processes, and peacekeeping operations must contribute actively to that in full coordination with them. I believe that coordination is key and should also be applied to relations among the various entities present in the field so that the link between security and development is not merely a concept for research efforts but also truly effective on the ground.

If we are to ensure the success of peacekeeping operations, we have a twofold task — better prioritizing and sequencing for mandates so as to prevent what the Secretary-General called a Christmas tree. That is particularly important for the multidimensional mandates that represent the connection to peacebuilding. Both the short- and long-term objectives must be well understood by all components of the mission, as well as by its external partners. The mandates must then be converted into concepts of operation and rules of engagement, implemented by all Blue Helmets as part of the principles of peacekeeping.

That goal of more effective peacekeeping clearly requires operations conducted in optimal conditions. The Netherlands presidency has rightly called on us to address the issues of establishing the criteria for success, the measurement of progress and performance evaluations. That involves all of us — the members of the Security Council, the Secretariat, force contributors, host countries and regional organizations. France is committed to that as a troop-contributor, the second-highest in Europe and among the permanent members of the Security Council. This is not about giving good and bad marks but about improving the overall level of peacekeeping. The development of evaluation, analysis and action tools and strategic reviews conducted by the Secretariat are of course part of that change. Troop- and police-contributing countries should also participate fully in that effort. I believe that better performance will be achieved once there is full respect for the procedures and the concept of operations of missions. That will make it possible to reduce the number of peacekeepers killed or injured in operations, which is still too high.

As noted by my colleague, the Brahimi report (S/2000/809), the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) and the Cruz report have made relevant and operational recommendations to improve the overall performance of peacekeeping. The time for action is now. Today's meeting marks an important moment in the process launched by the Secretary-General. We believe that there are three key components to improving performance.

First is training — before, during and after deployment, in the basic military operational areas as well as linguistically. Without interaction with local populations, peacekeepers will not be fully effective. That was the issue discussed at a ministerial conference held in Paris in late 2016 on peacekeeping in a francophone environment. France has made a great contribution in that regard. We train almost 30,000 French-speaking African soldiers a year, who provide major contingents to peacekeeping operations.

We intend to further develop our cooperation with the troop contributors and the Secretariat. We intend to increase our involvement in teaching French in military and police academies, particularly in Africa, South America and Asia. We also seek to promote the widest dissemination of doctrinal concepts drafted by the Secretariat to French-speaking contributing countries and thereby help them to strengthen their participation in peacekeeping operations by acquiring the necessary operational skills, which will promote increasingly effective and successful predeployment certification.

The second key to performance is better force generation, given the need to enhance mobility and force projection and, as has been said, to increase the presence of women in operations.

Thirdly, I believe that peacekeeping operations must enjoy the resources necessary to implement all the components of their mandates and use them in the best possible way. As the fifth-largest financial contributor to the peacekeeping budget, France is contributing fully. France systematically consults the troop-contributing countries ahead of the renewal of a mandate for which it is responsible. We are committed to doing this even more regularly throughout the year.

The exemplary nature of peacekeeping agents is critical for us. France fully supports the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse. Preventing and suppressing sexual violence is essential. Any violation of the law must be firmly punished. Zero tolerance must extend to all behaviours that could hinder the smooth running of the mission.

Our ambition for peacekeeping must be fully reflected in the United Nations relations with regional organizations, which play a growing role in the promotion of peace and international security. The Charter of the United Nations is far-sighted in providing for it in Chapter VIII.

The European Union plays an indispensable role, as do, of course, the African Union and the subregional organizations of the continent. Their operations can play a role that is perfectly complementary to those of the United Nations, as eloquently noted by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. That can been seen with the Joint

Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, whose full operationalization should facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

France welcomes and fully supports the development of such operations, which must have established planning and accountability systems, as well as predictable and sustainable funding mechanisms. France will continue to contribute to efforts in this direction. At the right the time, and as the President of the Republic said in Ouagadougou, within the Security Council France will support the African Union initiative to ensure independent and predictable financing for African peace operations.

This year marks the centenary of the end of the First World War. This conjuncture reminds us of our collective responsibility not to let history repeat itself again and again. That is why France is fully committed to ensuring that multilateralism, and in particular the United Nations, can meet today's challenges. Peacekeeping is the manifestation of that ambition. It will naturally be at the heart of the Paris Peace Forum on 11 November, which will fully support the United Nations efforts to attenuate warfare. It will be the first iteration of an annual meeting involving States, international organizations and civil society to advance global governance by making it ever more effective and adapted to contemporary global challenges.

We who sit comfortably in this Chamber today owe that to populations held hostage by conflict. We owe it to our peoples, who demand action rather than resignation. We owe it to Aïchatou, Peter, Ratih and Luis, who as I speak are the very embodiment of the United Nations and of hope on the ground.

Baron Ahmad (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate and for your contribution at this most opportune and important time.

May I also take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Guterres for his leadership and his commitment to reform on peacekeeping, Chairperson Mahamat and Ms. Touré, who gave a passionate, powerful and poignant reminder through her reflections on the role of peacekeeping and how its effectiveness can be improved. I am sure we all heard her voice, her plea and her contribution in very clear terms.

As we mark 70 years of United Nations peacekeeping, it is right that we pause and reflect on the many lives saved and on the regions and countries that have been stabilized over the years. There are millions of people living in some of the most challenging places on Earth. They have been given hope; they have been given opportunity. That is the proud legacy of the toil and sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of men and women who have put their lives at risk. Some, indeed, have lost their lives to protect the most vulnerable. In this 70th anniversary year, we salute their service and the service of those who support United Nations efforts through regional bodies like the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Over the past seven years, the challenges that peacekeepers face have evolved. Disputes are increasingly complex. Mission settings are increasingly dangerous, and too often our collective contribution in this building has failed to keep pace. United Nations peacekeeping is far too important to fail. In recent years, we have indeed made progress, for example in planning and force generation. The Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conferences in London in 2016 and Vancouver in 2017 delivered 80 new pledges of personnel and capability. This progress must continue.

We welcome the Secretary-General's call to action this year, and also I welcome his statement today on a sharpened focus on the safety and security of peacekeepers. The United Nations action plan to implement some of the recommendations is also very timely. I also welcome the Secretary-General's statement today that he will provide regular updates on the delivery of the action plan. As we embark on this collective effort to improve United Nations peacekeeping, the United Kingdom would suggest three areas on which to focus.

First, the Security Council must take its responsibilities seriously and have the information available in order to do so. We must set clear, achievable objectives for peacekeeping operations and not be afraid to sequence so that mandates provide the right direction and the right resources at the right time. We should go further, setting mandates that are most strategic and take a longer-term view. To do this, the Council needs high-quality, timely and accurate information and analysis. We, States and institutions alike, need to work together better to achieve this.

Secondly, to succeed peacekeeping operations need to be complemented by all the tools that the United Nations and the international community have at our

disposal. We need better coordination at Headquarters and in the field with peacebuilding, better development and all other arms of the United Nations to support. That is why we support the vision and themes underpinning the Secretary-General's sustaining peace proposals and his peace and security architecture reforms.

Thirdly, we must improve performance, and strengthen accountability for underperformance. There needs to be a better match between the capacity of the troops and the tasks that they are asked to perform. That requires the Department for Peacekeeping Operations to reinforce work on force generation, training, performance monitoring and, indeed, evaluation. It also requires Member States to deliver the capabilities that they have committed. We must continue to recognize the essential role of women in ensuring the successful delivery of peacekeeping, and engage more women in all components of all missions.

Above all, we must stop sexual exploitation and abuse by those sent to protect civilians, and we must offer real protection for women, children and all vulnerable communities, as Ms. Touré highlighted in her contribution this morning. Furthermore, addressing conflict-related sexual violence is equally crucial. The United Kingdom plans to host an international meeting in 2019 marking progress made and the next steps to take since the Global Summit on Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict was held five years ago. Although we welcome the progress made, in particular the United Nations new victim-centred approach, too many incidents of concern across the United Nations system remain.

Through the leadership of the Secretary-General, we have an opportunity to make United Nations peacekeeping fit for our times. It is the responsibility of all of us to work together to seize that opportunity. That means the Council, the Secretariat, regional and subregional bodies, host States and those who provide troops, police and financing. Let us not forget that those United Nations peacekeepers, under the banner of the United Nations, act in the name of each and every one of us. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that they embody the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations because, through them, we ultimately unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We convey our gratitude for the holding of this debate and especially welcome your participation in and contribution to the debate, Mr. Prime Minister. We are also grateful for the presence of other high-level authorities, and we welcome the briefings by Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Ms. Fatimata Touré, Director of Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action. In particular, we would like to highlight the vision and leadership of Secretary-General António Guterres at the helm of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

As a country, Peru is committed to those operations. We have contributed troops since 1958, and we currently have a presence in six countries, including an engineering unit in the Central African Republic. We believe that the Blue Helmets are essential to the protection of civilians and advancing transitions leading towards achieving sustainable peace in the 15 countries in which they are currently deployed. We pay special tribute to the soldiers of more than 110 countries committed to that noble mission.

We believe that the current discussion is important inasmuch as it relates to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in circumstances in which they must respond to increasingly complex mandates, including in situations in which there is really no peace to maintain. In that regard, we must first consider that the cost of peacekeeping is typically nominal compared to the costs associated with war and its destruction, and that successfully maintaining peace requires a firm and supportive international consensus that begins in the Security Council and must be translated into concrete operational capacities. That requires mandates with precise goals, coherent strategies and sufficient financial and logistic resources, which in turn means that their mandates, and the international community's general approach to peacekeeping operations must be periodically reviewed and updated by the Council. In that vein, we would like to highlight four points.

First, it is necessary to clearly define the goals and functions of troop-contributing countries so as to increase the effectiveness of operations. The Organization must be able to raise the standards of its peacekeeping operations as they relate to emergency situations and specific needs. To that end, fluid dialogue relating to policy and operational dimensions needs to be maintained among the Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat. Specifically, as set out in resolution 2378 (2017), we believe that it is necessary to move forward in establishing rapid deployment mechanisms, training troops and using modern technology and specialized capacities. The

increase in women's participation and leadership is also an important development.

Secondly, it is crucial to adapt peacekeeping operations strategies to their contexts on a case-by-case basis. The Organization must clearly determine the viability and validity of a given mandate based on developments on the ground. In that regard, we underscore that two conditions — the consent and cooperation of the host State, and the existence of a real political process — must first be met. In addition to that, the Organization must provide an adequate assessment of the risks associated with and the causes underlying the conflict. It is also desirable to generate synergies with countries bordering the country hosting the mission so as to prevent cross-border trafficking that sometimes fuel the conflict.

Moreover, peacekeeping operations must be able to depend upon capacities involving intelligence and exercising influence upon their interlocutors on the ground. The use of general and specific sanctions has proven to be effective, but in certain cases it can be complemented with other measures involving political pressures. It is important to explore the best forms of complementarity involving military forces or regional coalitions in order to determine the best course of action. Such participation should be complemented financially by the Organization.

Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure the security of peacekeeping operations. The number of Blue Helmets who have recently lost their lives in the line of duty is unacceptable. Together with the Secretariat, Peru considers that to be a priority issue that must be addressed by the immediate implementation of a plan of action covering training and early warning. In line with the report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*, and the Brahimi report (S/2000/809), we believe that it is essential to analyse the environment to which a given unit will be sent, and to provide it with the corresponding resources and training. Its credibility and, ultimately, ability to fulfil its mandate depend on that. In that connection, we commend the important work of the Secretary-General in preventing and firmly and decisively addressing all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations.

Lastly, it is necessary to align peacekeeping operations with peacebuilding efforts with the general goal and the process of achieving sustainable peace, aimed at ensuring the orderly transition to stable and safe environments, respect for human rights and sustainable development. It is therefore important that the Council maintain close cooperation with troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat, as well as the Peacebuilding Commission. Peacekeeping operations must do the same on the ground, while working with various national stakeholders and the United Nations country team.

We would like to conclude by recalling the words of former Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar upon receiving the first Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of peacekeeping operations. He said then that they symbolize the international community's will to bring about peace and represent the impartial and practical manifestation of that will.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank the presidency of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for organizing this high-level debate on peacekeeping operations and for building on the momentum generated over recent years on the reform agenda. We are pleased to see you, Mr. Prime Minister, presiding over this meeting, which demonstrates the importance that your country attaches to reforming and strengthening the role of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, as well as for his leadership on the issue. Allow me to say how grateful we are for his statement today, which was frank, incisive and comprehensive. He has said all that needs to be said. It is a must-read statement indeed.

We are also pleased that Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat was able to join us via video-teleconference, and we thank him for his remarks. We are proud of what he has been doing to revitalize the African Union Commission. Let me take this opportunity to express how pleased we are to see the excellent cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union under their respective new leadership.

We also thank Ms. Fatimata Touré for her remarks. The Security Council mission was in Mali and two other countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel in October last year. We therefore had the opportunity to appreciate the deep concern she expressed and shared with us. We thank her.

We all agree that United Nations peacekeeping operations are one of the most important tools that we have in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. That is why we continue to attach great importance to United Nations peacekeeping. But at the same time, we know that the peace and security challenges we face today are by far different from those we faced in the early days of United Nations peacekeeping. That is why there is a need to change and adapt to the new reality in order to be able to effectively respond to the challenges and threats of our time.

Of course, the discussion on the reform of United Nations peacekeeping has been ongoing for more than two years now. There are many good ideas and recommendations that have been generated through those discussions. It therefore seems to us, as was also alluded to by the Secretary-General, that now is the time to prioritize implementation. What matters most is taking practical steps to move the reform process forward. It is vitally important that we avoid getting bogged down in the same old discussions, some of which have been with us since the Brahimi report (S/2000/809), issued more 17 years ago. We thank the Secretary-General for making the reform agenda his top priority and for the important measures that he is taking in that regard. That was manifest in his statement today. Let me now raise a couple of issues.

We agree that there is a need to change our mindset for the reform process to succeed. That is absolutely important. Part of the new way of thinking should be that reform of United Nations peacekeeping requires the involvement of everybody. Therefore, the idea of a shared responsibility involving all actors — including host nations, regional organizations, the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat — is very critical. That should be front and centre in the whole reform process because there is a great need to alter the tendency, which is often apparent, to look at reform only from a narrow perspective. It is vitally important that this tendency be avoided and discarded.

We very much appreciate that there is a lot going on at the moment in terms of reforms, which is not limited to peace and security. What is involved is a reform process that is system-wide, encompassing management and development reforms as well. We certainly see a lot of synergy among all those reform processes, and we understand the enormous significance that they have in avoiding fragmentation and ensuring a holistic approach to addressing peace and security threats and challenges across the whole conflict cycle, from prevention and resolution to peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

That said, however, we understand that it is practically impossible to implement those reforms all at the same time and in one go, and we see value in prioritization. Taking the incremental approach in undertaking those reforms will have a better chance of delivering the desired result. As recommended by the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/466), the Secretariat should be much more field-focused. While appreciating the bold steps that are being proposed to reduce bureaucratic barriers and ensure greater efficiency, we should be careful not to make the reform process too centred on structures and processes at the Headquarters, without having much impact in the field. Here again, propositions and visions have been laid out in a convincing manner. What remains is implementation on the ground in an equally convincing manner.

Peacekeepers can only be expected to effectively deliver on their mandate of protecting civilians, while ensuring their own safety and security, if they are provided with the necessary resources and capabilities, which are matched with the needs and requirements on the ground. Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat rightly stressed that point. The issue of performance and accountability can be meaningfully addressed if those necessary conditions are fulfilled. That is in no way meant to understate the value of ensuring accountability and compliance with the required standard of performance. It is rather a call for balanced judgment and objectivity. It is very obvious that we have yet to address that challenge. That, at any rate, is the view of troop- and police-contributing countries. We are hopeful that the ongoing reform will seriously address the challenge, which is critical to the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping.

The other important point that should also be emphasized is the need for global-regional partnerships, which are no longer a matter of choice, but one of necessity. That has been a topic of discussion here in the Council, and it is encouraging to note that there is now greater appreciation of that important reality. Such partnerships are no doubt instrumental, not only in enhancing the responsiveness of the United Nations in addressing conflict situations, but also in ensuring greater efficiency and effectiveness. We are pleased that the Secretary-General has attached great importance

to the issue and is already taking important steps to significantly enhance the partnership, for obvious reasons, with the African Union.

Those important reforms cannot be carried out without bringing all Member States on board. That is no doubt frustrating, as building the necessary consensus is never easy, but it is indispensable and without alternative. It is, however, undeniable that at present summoning the needed political will is bound to be difficult, though not unachievable. It is doable because it is in the common interest of all to ensure that the reforms succeed, including those involving peace operations. But that is going to require every effort to be made to build trust and a spirit of compromise among Member States. That is why there is need to work in close consultation and partnership with troop-contributing countries and other relevant stakeholders.

As one of the leading troop-contributing countries, we definitely attach great importance to strengthening the United Nations peace operations in all their aspects. Our long-standing contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations is because of our history dictated by a strong conviction in multilateralism and collective security. That can be attested to by our track record over the past 70 years, as well as the performance of the thousands of our peacekeepers who are currently operating in some of the most volatile conflict situations, making sacrifices for the cause of regional and international peace and security.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Ethiopia's commitment to continuing to play an active role in enhancing the role of United Nations peacekeeping.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate and for preparing the concept note (S/2018/184, annex) to that end. I would also like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing, as well as His Excellency the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their briefings.

Out of our sense of responsibility with regard to peacekeeping, and based on our previous experience as a troop-contributing country (TCC) and a host for 12 years to the successful United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission, whose mandate ended in 2003 — and Kuwait funded two-thirds of its budget during the whole period — we would like to focus our statement on improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations through four aspects.

First is shared responsibility. Peacekeeping operations require coordination among the relevant parties and United Nations organs, which in turn requires addressing the pressing needs on the ground. In order to do so, we use peacekeeping operations, one of the most United Nations effective means for maintaining peace and security. When we speak of the three principles of peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and the use of force solely for self-defence — we must begin with the cornerstone, which is the perspective of the host country. It is the party that must be consulted throughout the phases of a mandate, from its formulation to full implementation, and including its extension and review.

The triangular cooperation, consultation and coordination that has been initiated by the Security Council mechanism with the TCCs and the Secretariat is another necessary way of ensuring cooperation with TCCs and hearing their concerns and perspectives throughout the various phases of a peacekeeping mandate. In addition to that, the note by the President on the Security Council's methods of work (S/2017/507) provides guidance on coordinating with TCCs.

The second aspect is current challenges. Last year's debates on peacekeeping operations provided us with many ideas and visions, most recently in December in this Chamber (see S/PV.8150), when Council members and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations addressed the issue of the ongoing provision to peacekeeping missions of the information they need in order to gain a clear understanding of the threats that they and civilians face, in addition to addressing the gaps in the military and civil requirements of peacekeeping in the areas of training, equipment, skills and language.

The cooperation of TCCs in sharing experiences and in capacity-building throughout the various stages of troop deployment can help to ensure coherence and coordination in dealing with challenges faced by peacekeeping. Kuwait supports all actions and efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the performance and efficiency of peacekeeping operations and address deficiencies that present obstacles to the full implementation of peacekeeping mandates. We appreciate the deep sense of responsibility that the Secretariat has demonstrated and its in-depth study of

performance, as well as the current action plan, set out in the Cruz report, for addressing the increasing number of fatalities in peacekeeping operations. We highly commend the peacekeepers who sacrificed their lives to maintain peace and protect civilians everywhere.

The third aspect is external factors affecting peacekeeping operations. The changes that peacekeeping operations are dealing with are not limited to coordination or addressing challenges during deployment. They also include adapting the principles of peacekeeping, such as the use of force in self-defence and defence of the mandate, to the increase in threats that do not respect the United Nations flag and the protection it provides, as the Secretary-General mentioned. Addressing external factors and cross-border challenges with their implications for peacekeeping operations, such as climate change, migration, displacement, increased conflicts and greater needs, requires a whole-of-mission approach that addresses the root causes of conflict, achieves sustained peace and ensures the non-recurrence of conflict. In that regard, I would like to highlight the importance of the Secretariat's ongoing strategic reviews of peacekeeping operations, which are a tool that the Council must use in order to adapt to changes that Member States cannot control.

Fourth is regional cooperation. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides us with an effective tool for cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, particularly when deployment of peacekeeping troops requires the participation of neighbouring countries, as we have witnessed in a number of missions in Africa. Regional cooperation is not limited to mobilizing and deploying forces. It also requires the participation of the parties concerned, starting with the host country, in the phases of formulating and reviewing a mandate, the emergence of challenges and changes before a situation escalates.

In conclusion, the aforementioned factors and challenges require clear and flexible mandates that can give peacekeepers the ability to adapt to changes on the ground and to the level of threats that they face, and ensure that operations can function properly without being indefinitely extended while at the same time failing to achieve their mandated goals. We must take the initiative and draw on the Council's reports, reviews, experiences and recommendations accumulated over more than a quarter of a century. We reiterate our appreciation to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for raising this topic today, with the aim of listening to the views of the greatest possible number of Member States on ways to improving peacekeeping, which has been one of the Council's most important tools over more than 70 years of maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting on collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations. We thank Secretary-General Guterres, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Director Fatimata Touré for their briefings.

We support the Secretary-General's focus on improving the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations and his emphasis on the importance of achieving political solutions to conflicts. Indeed, the main task of the United Nations peacekeeping presence is assisting the parties in reaching political agreements on peaceful settlements and ensuring that they are implemented as quickly as possible. In the absence of progress on the political track, missions can remain in countries for years. Of course, United Nations peacekeeping initiatives need to be adapted to the realities of today. They are deployed in difficult and dangerous conditions and increasingly in situations of domestic political crisis, compounded by grave humanitarian and socioeconomic situations. The most acute challenges of all are those presented by transborder issues such as the movement of weapons, organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking.

However, even under such difficult circumstances it is crucial to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the core principles of peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in self-defence and to protect the mandate. In our view, the increasingly frequent proposals that have lately been made to interpret them flexibly or revise them are pernicious. That particularly applies to calls to replace the ideology behind the implementation of peacekeeping operations with so-called proactive and robust peacekeeping and give Blue Helmets the right to the first use of force. It is extremely doubtful that such an approach can facilitate the desired goal, which is reducing the number of deaths among peacekeepers. On the contrary, it runs a high risk of producing the opposite effect. If the Blue Helmets' neutral authority is undermined, it can turn them into active participants

in conflicts, with an inevitable increase in the number of clashes with opponents and therefore the numbers of victims. Robust mandates cannot become routine and must be finely calibrated for each individual situation where they are deemed truly necessary, especially considering that the experience available so far of granting peacekeepers extra powers, for example in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, has not yet convinced us that the results on the ground fully justify the sacrifices by the peacekeepers in these operations. More than anything, we believe that the greatest potential for increasing peacekeepers' safety lies in strengthening their professional training and their material and technical equipment.

The principle of impartiality is also key, including in the context of implementing mandates for the protection of civilians. Peacekeepers should never, on any pretext, however well-meaning, side with one or another party to a conflict, let alone cite any non-United Nations principles that might permit the possible use of force with regard to a host State.

The overall success of United Nations peacekeeping activities, as well as of each individual mission, depends largely on the coherence of the efforts of the participants involved in the process, above all the Security Council, the Secretariat, the troop-contributing countries and the host States. In that regard, it is important to ensure not only that each link in the chain carries out its responsibilities conscientiously but also that the collaboration between each of those links is effective, confidential and transparent.

As always, the Organization's new peacekeeping challenges demand comprehensive discussion and consideration on the part of Member States and the Secretariat with a view to coming up with consistent, balanced approaches, dealing with the fragmented nature of the political and legal frameworks, developing relevant doctrines and producing normative documents in good time and based on analysis of accumulated experience. In that connection, it is important to ensure that any reform of United Nations peacekeeping activities is carried out in strict accord with the decisions of Member States. Any arbitrary interpretation, as there has been with the concept of information gathering and analysis for intelligence in peacekeeping, could have a negative impact on Member States' interaction with the Secretariat and could also risk damaging the credibility of the United Nations in the conduct of peacekeeping operations.

In our view, using intelligence for implementing a peacekeeping operation's activities is something that should be done based solely on the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the host Government, and only for the clearly defined and limited legitimate purposes of ensuring peacekeepers' safety and protecting civilians. Any use of intelligence flexibly or for political purposes, including fulfilling a mandate's political tasks, is unacceptable. We hope that the relevant conclusions will be drawn and that we will soon see results. It is also extremely important to establish constructive cooperation with host States, since the potential success of United Nations operations is directly dependent on it. International assistance should support local and regional efforts, not replace them.

Peacekeeping operations' mandates should be clear, realistic and fully capable of responding to the challenges facing the United Nations and the particular situation on the ground, with an emphasis on addressing the specific reasons for individual conflicts, not resolving various generic initiatives. In order to optimize peacekeeping operations on the economic front, it is advisable to accompany the modification of their mandates with an emphasis on reducing these kinds of side issues. Well-considered exit strategies are also essential, along with plans, as needed, for transforming peacekeeping operations into other types of political presence or as support to United Nations country teams' reconstruction and development efforts. In that regard, it is important to take account of the views of both the host Governments and the country teams in order to avoid distorted interpretations of missions' mandates or the possibility of overburdening them, which will ultimately make their implementation more effective.

A particularly important factor in implementing peacekeeping operations is genuine partnership on the part of the members of the international community. The efforts of regional and subregional organizations operating in their areas of responsibility, as outlined in Chapter VIII of the Charter, have become increasingly significant in that regard. In fact, no one has advanced this issue further than the African Union. We believe that it will be impossible to establish lasting peace throughout the continent without the active efforts of Africans themselves. It will therefore be important to work to ensure that it is the countries of Africa that play the major role in determining the pathways to peace

and security in accordance with their own principle of African solutions to African problems.

The Russian Federation has solid experience in training peacekeepers. Russian higher education institutions have successfully trained personnel, including women, for African law-enforcement bodies. Since 2000, more than 350 foreign police peacekeepers have been trained at the United Nations-certified Preparation Centre of the All-Russia Advanced Training Institute of Russia's Ministry of the Interior in Domodedovo, outside Moscow. The military educational and scientific centre of the Russian Federation's combined land-based armed forces military academy in Naro-Fominsk, as well as our armed forces' international anti-mine centre in Nakhabino, are also prepared to train peacekeepers from developing countries. We have developed a system that includes both general and specialized training immediately prior to deploying peacekeepers to specific missions. We will continue to provide all necessary assistance for strengthening the capacities of United Nations peacekeeping.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is grateful to the presidency of the Netherlands for convening today's open debate, and welcomes you, Prime Minister Rutte, to the Council. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union, for their briefings. I have also listened carefully to the statement by Ms. Touré.

I would first like to pay full tribute to the peacekeepers around the world who are serving in the cause of peace. In the 70 years of the history of United Nations peacekeeping operations, these missions have made an enormous contribution to the maintenance of peace and security. In recent years, they have been faced with more complex environments and mandates, with ever-increasing asymmetric security risks and peacekeeper casualties. Their continually expanding mandates are supported by only limited resources, and Member States and the Secretariat should work together to help the peacekeeping operations adapt in the light of the constantly evolving situations on the ground. China is determined to participate actively in the reform of the United Nations peace and security architecture and internal management, and will work together with all the relevant parties to improve the ability of United Nations peacekeeping operations to maintain world peace.

First, it is important to adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles guiding our peacekeeping operations. That is both a prerequisite of and a guarantee that the missions can conduct their work effectively and win the trust of host countries. It is important to fully respect the sovereignty of host countries, strengthen communication with them and, based on a response to their real needs, help them achieve peace and stability and enhance their capacity-building in that regard. It is important to avoid arbitrarily taking over responsibilities that fall under the purview of national sovereignty.

Secondly, Security Council mandates must be explicit and feasible, and have a clear focus. The Council must give priority to political settlements, focus on the core tasks of peacekeeping and take into full consideration the situation on the ground, the resources available, the capacities of troop-contributing countries and other important factors. The priorities and core tasks must be adjusted in a timely fashion as the situation dictates. In due course, workable exit strategies must be formulated, if the conditions allow and the host countries request it. Troop-contributing countries must be given more opportunities to take part in the discussion as mandates are developed and adjusted, which will also help to improve them.

Thirdly, it is important to strengthen the support and guarantees that the Secretariat provides to peacekeeping operations. The logistical support for peacekeeping operations must be optimized so as to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the resources allocated to them. Both the Secretariat and the peacekeeping missions should prioritize the safety and security of peacekeepers by establishing rules in that regard, enhancing the in-house monitoring and analysis of the local security situation, improving early-warning capabilities and internal information-sharing on potential security threats and ensuring that funds and equipment are available for the purpose. It is important to enhance and guarantee medical capabilities, particularly for medical treatment and evacuation during emergencies.

Fourthly, it is crucial to enhance troop-contributing countries' capacity-building and expand partnerships with regional organizations. The international community should take the real needs of troop-contributing countries, especially when they are developing countries, into full consideration.

Their capacity-building in peacekeeping must be strengthened. It is also important to ensure targeted training and resources for peacekeeping operations.

Attention and support must be given to the African Union and the other regional and subregional organizations that are playing an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa. The African Union must be assisted so as to enable it to establish an African standby force and quick reaction force as soon as possible. China supports African Union's proposal on funding for United Nations peacekeeping operations and hopes to see details on the African Union-owned peacekeeping operations.

China has actively participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations and has made major contributions to them. We are the second-largest troop-contributing country among Security Council members and the second-largest financial contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, with 2,500 Chinese peacekeepers now deployed in 10 missions, including those in South Sudan, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur. In the face of complex security situations and difficult natural conditions, they are working diligently to maintain peace and protect local civilians, and winning praise for the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations.

China is actively honouring the commitment that our President, Xi Jinping, announced to United Nations peacekeeping operations. We have established a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops and two standby peacekeeping police units, and have completed their registration in the United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System. We have sent our first helicopter squad to a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Africa and are giving the African Union active military assistance. The China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund views peacekeeping capacity-building as an important task, through which it aims to assist the United Nations in enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers and supporting developing countries, particularly African countries, in building their peacekeeping capacities.

Last but not least, China is ready to work with other Member States to further improve United Nations peacekeeping operations so that the world can enjoy lasting peace and universal security.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by personally welcoming you to New York, Prime Minister Rutte, and congratulating you on the Kingdom of the Netherlands' excellent presidency of the Security Council for the month of March, which is ending with this timely initiative of convening a high-level open debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations. I would also like to welcome to all the ministers who have joined us today, as well as Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Ms. Fatimata Touré, Director of Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action. I thank them both for their excellent briefings.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes today's very important open debate, which is enabling us to analyse and address together key aspects of the chief responsibility of the United Nations, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, my Government would like to commend the Secretary-General for the initiatives that he is spearheading to introduce reforms in various areas of our Organization, particularly our peacekeeping operations, considering that they represent one of the key platforms of the United Nations — since it is through them that we experience events directly, and it is there that the United Nations focuses its main effort and joint action to fulfil its mandates. We also commend the members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for their skill and ability and for having so ably shaped the study and in-depth review of issues related to peacekeeping operations with a view to achieving reform and enabling missions to carry out their important tasks effectively and efficiently.

We would like to take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to all the personnel of peacekeeping operations on active service for their courage and valour and to express our deepest condolences to the relatives and friends of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in discharging their duties.

Equatorial Guinea believes that the time is ripe to launch reforms to bring a new dynamism to the planning and implementation of the strategic international peace and security architecture that the United Nations supports, with the aim of enabling them to confront the new challenges and trends that conflicts present today. A careful analysis of the issues that are the focus of the current reform efforts leads us to conclude that they provide guidance and a more concrete, complex and credible strategic vision capable of adapting to evolving events and the evolving nature of conflicts.

All of the elements and points of these reforms represent a backbone of support for peacekeeping operations. We recognize that the chief responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security belongs to the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and that under the leadership of the Security Council, peacekeeping operations are one of the fundamental instruments available to the United Nations in fulfilling its noble mission. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, as the only body of the United Nations tasked with broadly studying all issues related to peacekeeping operations in all their aspects, including measures aimed at improving the Organization's ability to carry out those operations, in accordance with resolution 2378 (2017), has done its work, and we commend the quality of the efforts to frame the reforms. We believe firmly that their adoption and implementation will have a positive effect on the implementation of future peacekeeping operations and special political missions and will improve their strategic structure and functions so that they can act with greater coordination and flexibility in varying conflict situations, however complex they may be.

It is important that the parties involved in peacekeeping and international security operations, and all actors, honour their commitments and responsibilities and faithfully interpret the rules set out in the mandates, always paying close attention to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. It should be noted and underscored that in resolving African matters, it is necessary to carefully take into account the customs and cultures of African ethnic groups, their ancestral traditions for resolving disputes and conflicts, starting with the advice of elders, tribal chiefs and religious leaders, and youth community associations. Those groups of traditional actors play a very important role in resolving issues and are the basic cells and links that can have a positive influence in resolving any conflict affecting their community. That creates greater trust and transparency and generating very little criticism of missions as they discharge their duties.

Africa's voice must be heard and kept in mind when designing and structuring peacekeeping operations, since more than half of all missions are deployed on African soil. African nations are the principal troop-contributing countries for those operations. We think that improving communication and coordination with African countries is indispensable for enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. The African Union, the regional and subregional organizations and the countries of the regions affected are stakeholders that should also be an integral part of the deployment of any peacekeeping operation in Africa. It is important that such operations collaborate and cooperate with regional and subregional organizations. In that connection, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the excellent collaboration and coordination that currently exist between the United Nations and the African Union, between Secretary-General António Guterres and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Mahamat.

Peacekeeping operations should not be considered an end in themselves, but rather as a means to reach a solution to a conflict so they can ensure a transition to peacebuilding and later to development and reconstruction. Therefore it is important that peacekeeping operations be designed to support the efforts of the host country, build capacity and strengthen security, be self-sufficient and achieve sustainable development. United Nations development agencies or other organizations must also play the leading role in such efforts.

I cannot conclude without expressing the concern and condemnation of the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea with regard to constant criminal attacks on the staff of peacekeeping and international security missions carried out by terrorists, armed groups and enemies of peace. Such attacks must stop. The Governments concerned must shoulder their responsibility to protect peacekeeping missions, and the violators must be brought to justice.

At the same time, Equatorial Guinea pays special tribute to the more than 100,000 men and women who serve and have served in peacekeeping operations and commend them for their professionalism, dedication and courage, especially those who have given their lives to maintain peace and security. We encourage all others in the field to continue to defend international peace and security, because many children, women and elderly people throughout the world are in despair, and their only hope is in peacekeepers. We ask that they continue their efforts. We are with tham.

To conclude, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates its commitment to continuing to support the efforts and initiatives of the United Nations within its

architecture for international peace and security, as it has already done in several African conflicts and emergency situations by donating financial support and material goods and training staff to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. Mark Rutte, to today's meeting and thank the presidency for convening today's important meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat; and the civil society representative, in her capacity as Director of the Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action, Ms. Fatimata Touré, for their briefings.

My delegation would like to begin by paying its most sincere tribute to all men and women in contingents in United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world, who spare no effort in discharging their duties and mandate. We thank the countries that contribute troops, police, observers and civilians for their generosity, solidarity and commitment to the United Nations system and to countries that are plagued by the effects of conflict and instability.

There is no doubt that the international landscape is not static; it is undergoing tremendous change. Persistent threats to international peace and security from terrorist groups and transnational crime have revealed the imperative need for peacekeeping operations to undergo profound structural reform that allows them to adapt more efficiently and effectively to their respective environments.

The United Nations has received important inputs and information and recommendation instruments to advocate a change and improve the performance of deployed missions and optimize the various levels of the system's internal decision-making and planning. We refer to the Brahimi report (S/2000/809) and to the report and recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), which examined various options, mechanisms and tasks, as well as challenges facing peace operations now.

On the other hand, the report on improving security of United Nations peacekeepers, better known as the Cruz report, is a relevant tool that makes a considerable contribution to issues relating to the security of peacekeepers and to the structural issues of peacekeeping operations, such as leadership, mindset, equipment, and training and capability of troops.

The approaches included in the aforementioned reports enable us to pinpoint the various priorities of peacekeeping operations. They also identify ways to strengthen them in order to develop a coherent and adapable system for meeting new conflict and post-conflict situations. Operations will be guided by clear, specific and achievable mandates that are developed in accordance with the reality on the ground, specific action plans that avoid operational complications.

As a State that champions dialogue and mechanisms for peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes, Bolivia believes that political measures are the drivers of the new design and implementation of peace missions. Such measures should be used to find political solutions that will lead to sustainable and lasting peace. Political dialogue implies learning; it requires thinking and acknowledgement of the differences, but also of agreements. It facilitates recovery from a crisis and can avert the escalation of violence.

We underscore that a preventive approach, within the framework of an in-depth, case-by-case study, is indispensable to an appropriate design and understanding of mandates, whatever their nature, with regard to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the States, promoting national ownership and without using that approach as an intervention tool. A technical, logistic and, above all, realistic analysis is required to effectively and adecuately determine the economic, human and material resources missions need In that regard, we underscore the pressing need to improve the institutional agility of troop deployment, as well as in selecting the best trained and most specialized troops to respond to the asymmetric contexts, which we mentioned earlier. It should be noted that appropriate levels of equipment and training for troops is not the responsibility only of contributing countries, but also of the Organization in general.

The constant attacks against members of peacekeeping forces and the regrettable tolls they take demonstrate the need to strengthen the key parts of missions, principally those related to situational knowledge on the ground and the capacity of units to mobilize and react quickly, and above all to reinforce the defence and protection measures of the camps and the personnel themselves.

In that regard, we must take into account all possible modalities of support for the financing of peace operations in a sustained, predictable and flexible manner. Those modalities must be assessed and revised in such a way that they allow better autonomy for the United Nations vis-à-vis countries that provide greater support to missions, since the financial element could be against the very purpose and objective of the missions.

It is worth noting that no peacekeeping mission can succeed if it does not have the host country's support. Ongoing and fluid coordination, the exchange of information and confidence-building mechanisms between missions and local authorities are essential.

Finally, given that this is the last open debate in March, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate the delegation of the Netherlands for the successful and efficient leadership of the work of the Security Council during this month.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Furthermore, I wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate through the lunch hour, as we have a large number of speakers.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia.

Mrs. Marsudi (Indonesia): I thank the presidency of the Netherlands for convening this timely debate. I appreciate the briefings by the Secretary-General and other briefers.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

While noting that efforts to make United Nations peacekeeping more effective and efficient are under way, priority should be given to the field missions and the people on the ground. In the light of that, ASEAN would like to offer the following points.

First, reform should be geared towards enhancing performance and capabilities and improving and expediting decision-making processes in the field missions. Secondly, in order to conclude a mission successfully, the budget and other resources must match the mission's mandates. Thirdly, the safety and security of our peacekeepers is a shared responsibility of us all in this body. Members of the Council may rest assured that ASEAN will continue to promote and support United Nations peacekeeping through ASEAN-led mechanisms and collective efforts.

I will now speak in my national capacity.

Indonesia has been providing peacekeeping services for more than 60 years and since 1957 has deployed more than 37,000 peacekeepers to various United Nations missions. Today, Indonesia is one of the ten largest contributors to United Nations peacekeeping, with more than 2,650 personnel in nine missions, 83 of whom are female peacekeepers. Last month, I visited our troops in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, to which Indonesia contributes the greatest number of troops. I wish to share my observation from the ground.

First, we need to consider new ideas in protecting civilians in conflict situations, including new measures to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers on the ground. Secondly, we can no longer do business as usual. Peacekeeping missions and peacekeepers must be well trained and well equipped, adequately resourced and geared to win the hearts and minds of the local community.

Since each conflict has its own dynamic, it is important to formulate tailored capacity-building for peacekeepers. For that reason, Indonesia established its own peacekeeping centre in 2007 as a training ground for Indonesian peacekeepers and a hub for peacekeeping training centres in the region. Together, we need to find a new way to provide cost-effective and innovative procurement of equipment to address capability gaps in peacekeeping missions, including the participation of strategic industries from developing countries.

Thirdly, strong partnership and an approach coordinated among all stakeholders must be improved. Troop- and police-contributing countries and host States should be given more voice in designing mandates. The Security Council should make sure that mandates are clear and realistic, have an achievable exit strategy, and are focused on supporting political processes. The Secretariat should formulate policies that are flexible and less bureaucratic, allowing missions to perform more effectively. We welcome the Secretary-General's

efforts in proposing a reform of the peace and security pillar of the United Nations system.

Fourthly, engagement with regional and subregional organizations should be enhanced to support political processes in peacekeeping missions, and fifthly, we should have more women peacekeepers. I have witnessed at first hand how women peacekeepers are well positioned to help win the hearts and minds of the locals and to effectively protect civilians, as well as prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse.

As a candidate for non-permanent membership of the Security Council in 2019-2020, Indonesia will remain committed to being a true partner for world peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Maas (Germany): I wish to thank Prime Minister Rutte for organizing this important debate on peacekeeping. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. I am honoured to be here today, just days after assuming my new office.

Collective action is crucial for United Nations peacekeeping, as it is in any other policy area. Be it climate change, migration or economic development; be it human rights, global health or sustaining peace and security — we need more collective action. We need robust multilateral institutions and at the heart of our rules-based order, we need a strong United Nations. Where better than in this Chamber to underline that we need a Security Council that is united in both its purpose and its responsibility?

The peacekeeper's Blue Helmet stands for help and protection. It symbolizes peace and security. For the international community, it is a call to joint action and shared responsibility. The more than 100,000 peacekeepers helping countries to navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace deserve our respect, deep gratitude and support.

The return of violent conflict has caused immense human suffering at great social and economic cost. Just one glaring example of this is Syria, where all too often the Council has been unable to take decisions, or where its decisions have not been implemented.

The answer to drawn-out crisis situations can be only a more coherent approach to sustaining peace. The Secretary-General has laid this out in his reform proposals, and he has Germany's full support.

Germany is a strong financial and political supporter of United Nations peacekeeping. We are helping to strengthen peacekeepers' safety and security, make policing a core area of peace operations, and increase women's role in peacekeeping. In order to support the United Nations in crisis prevention and follow the Secretary-General's call for a quantum leap in peacebuilding funding, Germany has tripled its contributions in these areas.

Our largest United Nations deployment is in Mali. Our Parliament agreed to provide up to 1,000 peacekeepers and high-end capabilities such as helicopters and drones. That combined effort will hopefully help secure lasting peace and stability in the country itself and in the Sahel region in general. German support in Mali, South Sudan and Lebanon, to name just a few countries, is always embedded in a comprehensive political strategy — both nationally and within the European Union. As laid out in our recently adopted coalition agreement, Germany will continue to build on this engagement in the coming years, as a candidate for — and hopefully a member of — the Security Council in the biennium 2019-2020.

In conclusion, I would like to make three points. First, we need stronger and more effective partnerships among the United Nations and such organizations as the African Union, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Secondly, peacekeeping is not an end in itself. It is a tool to support political solutions. We need a coherent political strategy, clear-sighted objectives and realistic expectations from the start. Thirdly, peacekeeping will only be as effective as we are willing to make it. Missions must have the means they need to fulfil their mandates.

One more thing must be said: at times, peacekeepers have let down the very people they had sworn to protect, including through sexual abuse and exploitation. That is unacceptable. There must be accountability. In order to further improve peacekeeping, we have taken careful note of the Secretary-General's proposals. Our words must now lead to action. We owe this to the people we are entrusted with protecting.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Defence of Estonia.

Mr. Luik (Estonia): I would like to start by saying that United Nations peacekeeping operations have played a unique role in securing peace and stability globally for a very long time. We thank the Kingdom of Netherlands for organizing today's open debate on this highly relevant topic.

Estonia also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The international security environment has significantly changed in recent times. The threats we are facing are more complex, asymmetric and sometimes difficult to attribute. Correspondingly, there has been a change in the peacekeeping environment. Our peacekeepers can rely less and less on the protection provided by the colour blue as they are increasingly being targeted themselves, as highlighted in the Cruz report. At the same time, United Nations peacekeeping missions carry greater mandates and demands: they no longer only keep the peace, but are on the ground to build peace, protect civilians, help address the root causes of conflicts and assist in finding political solutions.

It is our belief that the United Nations will maintain its leading role in bringing peace and stability to different regions. In order to successfully continue to do so, the United Nations needs to adapt to the new security environment. In the light of this, we welcome the Secretary-General's push to reform how the United Nations manages peacekeeping missions and the whole peace and security pillar. Accordingly, I would like to make a couple of more specific remarks.

First, we share the idea that Security Council mandates for peacekeeping operations could be more realistic and robust. The Council is the primary political body responsible for giving guidance and consulting with partners in the field. The Council should increase its focus on adopting more mission-specific and tailored mandates. Closer coordination with the United Nations mission commanders would also help to achieve tasks for the successful fulfilment of mandates.

Secondly, decision-making should be improved. The United Nations could become quicker and more flexible in addressing the dynamics of crisis areas. To that end, we support greater delegation of power to the field, which would help guarantee that operations are reactive and can rapidly and effectively respond to complex and changing circumstances on the ground. We believe that approach would also benefit from improved gender balance in peacekeeping.

Thirdly, Member States have a responsibility to provide adequate troops and capabilities to United Nations operations. It is not by chance that the year 2017 saw the highest number of peacekeeper fatalities from acts of violence in absolute terms in the last two decades. We are sad witnesses to the simple fact that in crisis areas where more than one mission is ongoing, United Nations missions are less equipped and not as well trained as operations led by other actors.

Also, restrictive national caveats make it more difficult for our Blue Helmets to achieve the overall success of the missions. Adequate training and equipment of forces is the responsibility of all of the States Members of the United Nations. Stronger implementation of accountability measures and remedial action should be adopted in order to ensure that our troops are prepared and able to carry out the tasks we ask them to do. It must also be noted that we have zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse.

Fourthly and finally, I would like to underline that creating security and stability requires cooperation and coordination with other actors in the field who are working towards a similar goal. In this regard, the Government of Estonia has recently decided to deploy troops within the French-led Operation Barkhane to help improve stability in the Republic of Mali and the wider Sahel. Our troops will be based in Gao, right next to the much larger base of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. These two missions work to bring stability and safety to the population of Mali, and it is crucial that they continue to support each other's efforts.

I would like to conclude by emphasizing that every peacekeeping or military operation encounters challenges. In our view, to keep pace with changes in the field, the United Nations could focus on a couple of key themes: tailored country- and region-specific mandates, and better prepared forces with greater capabilities and fewer caveats. Estonia will continue to contribute so as to make a difference in favour of a peaceful world and promote these ideas throughout our bid for the non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the biennium 2020-2021.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of National Defence of Canada.

Mr. Sajjan (Canada): I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women. Peace and Security — an informal network of 53 interested

Member States, representing all five regional groups of the United Nations and chaired by Canada. In the context of today's open debate, the Group wishes to emphasize the importance of women's participation and gender perspectives in United Nations peacekeeping.

As recognized by resolution 2378 (2017), women play an indispensable role in peacekeeping. Their participation and decision-making at all levels is key to the operational effectiveness of missions. Experience has shown that women bring valuable perspectives to and increase situational awareness in missions by accessing a greater diversity of information about threats and conflict and help to built trust with local communities. This supports both the safety and security of peacekeepers and the operational effectiveness of missions.

We therefore support calls, including the specific targets set out in resolution 2242 (2015), to increase the number of women in uniform and civilian women in peacekeeping. We must redouble our efforts and engage in new and creative thinking to resolve persistent gaps in and structural barriers to female participation and leadership. We recognize the importance of political will, attitudinal change and resources for increasing the meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping. We encourage the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support to finalize work on a gender strategy for Headquarters and to ensure the implementation of targets in field missions.

Beyond increasing the number of women deployed, greater efforts are required to mainstream gender considerations in peacekeeping. In that regard, peacekeeping operations need to be equipped with appropriate gender-responsive conflict analysis and expertise at all levels and all stages, including in the development of mandates. Leadership in peacekeeping operations must ensure that such experts, including gender advisers and women protection advisers, are provided with the access and resources needed to fulfil their critical tasks.

Lastly, we condemn in the strongest terms cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations and in international assistance. Recent allegations across the United Nations have reinforced the need for a system-wide approach. We welcome the recent initiatives of the Secretary-General, including the appointment of a sexual exploitation and abuse Victims' Rights Advocate and field-based victims' rights advocates, and we welcome efforts to combat sexual harassment.

Yet, much more still needs to be done to ensure accountability and fundamentally reconfigure our collective approach to make responses victim-centred. We encourage the Secretary-General to ensure that common standards are developed and implemented across all United Nations entities and shared with implementing partners to better prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. Both the United Nations and Member States must play their part. Allow me to now make a few remarks about women in peacekeeping and security in my national capacity.

Canada views the participation of women in all aspects of peacekeeping as essential to mission success. Yet, despite that reality, the United Nations and its Member States have repeatedly failed to reach targets set for the deployment of women. The time for change is now and we must be bold. Recently, Canada launched the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations, an innovative and multilateral pilot initiative to design, implement and evaluate a combination of measures to overcome barriers to women's deployment to United Nations peace operations and to support their effectiveness once on missions. Last month, Canada hosted representatives from Member States, the United Nations, civil society and academia for a design workshop on the Elsie Initiative. Canada has also formed a contact group to conduct advocacy in the United Nations system with regard to the representation of women in United Nations peace operations to help us develop and implement the five-year pilot initiative.

Peacekeeping operations play a life-saving role in the protection of the most vulnerable, including children. Canada believes that there is much more we can do to enhance child protection. As many of those present know, Canada developed the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers. Canada launched this initiative last November, in partnership with retired General Roméo Dallaire. It seeks to identify early warning signs, take action to end recruitment and promote the reporting of abuses and grave violations against children. Since their launch five months ago, the Vancouver Principles have already been endorsed by 62 Member States. In the coming year, Canada will convene the endorsing States, the United Nations and members of the child protection community to develop practical implementation guidance for those principles.

Each of the initiatives I have mentioned reflects Canada's understanding that we must do peacekeeping differently and in a way that reflects the present day realities of conflict. For decades, peacekeeping has helped to prevent violence, preserve peace and provide protection to millions of vulnerable people affected by conflicts. Moreover, as my Prime Minister has said, peacekeeping operations are important for us not only because they allow us to assist millions of vulnerable people in conflict zones, but also because a peaceful world is a more secure world for Canada.

What we have seen over the past 25 years, however, are mandates that are more complex and that demand more and more from both our personnel and systems of responding. Though the peacekeeping community has been adapting and incorporating lessons learned, it is imperative that we continuously adapt, innovate and respond to new challenges. We must identify the root causes of conflict and the grievances that fuel it. In short, we must do peacekeeping differently, better and together.

There is so much analysis and reporting and so many initiatives under way that encourage us to look at peacekeeping in a comprehensive manner. Canada commends the leadership of the Secretary-General and his reform efforts across all pillars, which recognize that sustaining peace remains at the heart of what we do. We also welcome the important work that the United Nations is undertaking on enhancing the safety and security of our peacekeepers. Lieutenant General Santos Cruz and his team have delivered frank assessments and honest advice. The mantle now lies with us.

As Members of the United Nations, whether as host nations or as troop, police, financial or equipment contributors, we all have an essential role to play. That is why Canada is proud to chair the Working Group of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. This year, the Committee completed one of its most compelling negotiations, during which it brought together the voices of troop and police contributors to discuss various major efforts to improve the way we deliver peacekeeping. That is also why, during the Vancouver Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in November, Canada convened 80 Member States and five international organizations to do just that. In the lead up to and during the Conference, we examined how we could collectively ensure greater safety for at-risk populations. We explored early warning and rapid deployment, smart pledges, training and capacity-building. Forty-eight new peacekeeping pledges were made, significantly enhancing the United Nations peacekeeping capabilities. Following the Vancouver Ministerial Conference, Canada remains steadfast in its continued commitment to and engagement in United Nations peacekeeping.

To that end, Canada has begun deploying key enablers and military capabilities that leverage Canadian expertise. Those are aimed at giving the United Nations the smart and flexible tools it needs to enhance performance and operational effectiveness. Last November, we committed a C-130 Hercules aircraft to provide tactical airlift support for the United Nations Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, and preparations for deployment are currently under way. That contribution speaks to our support in helping to enable the United Nations rapid deployment capacities and effective delivery in the field.

Last week, Canada committed an air task force to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). That contribution will include Chinook helicopters to provide urgently needed transport and logistics capacity and Griffon helicopters to provide armed escort and protection. We look forward to joining the 57 MINUSMA partner countries in our collective efforts to bring sustainable peace and stability to Mali and the Sahel.

In conclusion, Canada is convinced that, when properly mandated, resourced and supported, peacekeeping remains one of the most flexible and effective tools available to the international community in responding to crises. We welcome this open debate as an opportunity to further develop our collective thinking on how to respond to key challenges in the years ahead. All of us share that responsibility.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor and deliver this statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, we wish to convey, on behalf of the States members of the Movement, our respect to His Excellency Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and to express our

gratitude to his delegation for convening this high-level open debate on such an important issue. We are also grateful for the concept note (S/2018/184, annex) that has been circulated to guide our discussions today.

We also take this opportunity to recognize the diligence with which the delegation of the State of Kuwait, a member State of the Movement, presided over this organ during the brief but intense month of February.

In addition, we thank the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their valuable briefings.

Anything that concerns improving the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations is a matter of vital importance to the Non-Aligned Movement, in view of the fact that 88 per cent of peacekeeping personnel deployed on the ground come from non-aligned countries. Throughout our statement in this open debate, we will therefore emphasize the need for effective triangular consultations, or rather a renewed and revitalized alliance of shared responsibility among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat, in order to perform objective assessments and harness the potential of peacekeeping mandates and operations. Such an alliance could result, among other things, in the formulation of clear and viable mandates that reflect the scale of existing challenges on the ground, but only if such cooperation is continuous, substantive, representative and meaningful, including before the renewal of mandates.

In that regard, the action plan resulting from the Santos Cruz report on improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers, of which we take note, provides a good basis for jointly responding to issues of concern and the common challenges we face, as well as for defining a long-term strategy, ensuring that peacekeeping operations can address the realities on the ground.

The States members of the Movement reiterate their commitment to promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 and Chapter IV of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as with all relevant United Nations resolutions and international law as a whole, in order to contribute to strengthening international peace and security and to save future generations from the scourge of war and armed conflict, including by strengthening the role of the United Nations in the peaceful resolution of disputes, the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the promotion of trust, national reconciliation and post-conflict peacebuilding, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

While there is agreement on the fundamental role that United Nations peacekeeping operations have played in achieving security and sustaining peace, as indicated in the concept note (S/2018/184, annex), we emphasize that, in the context of an integrated approach and with the objective of lasting peace and security, the implementation of all mandated tasks must be supported and accompanied by an inclusive, parallel and comprehensive political peacekeeping process that is well planned and carefully designed, based on national ownership and the support of the international community, as well as the consent and adherence of the parties concerned. In other words, peacekeeping operations should not be used as an alternative to addressing the root causes of conflicts or to manage conflicts.

It is worth noting that during the seventeenth Summit of the Movement, held in 2016 in Venezuela, our Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their principled position on peacekeeping operations, which must be carried out in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They also stressed that respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States, as well as non-interference in internal affairs, are fundamental elements of joint efforts to promote international peace and security. In doing so, they reiterated that respect for the basic principles of peacekeeping — primarily the consent of parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in cases of self-defence and defence of the mandate — is essential to the success of peacekeeping operations.

As reflected in the Santos Cruz report, performance affects the security of peacekeeping personnel. However, when dealing with the issue of performance, it is the performance of missions as a whole, and not only that of their contingents, that should be evaluated. Guaranteeing the effective implementation of mission mandates is the responsibility of the interested parties and is subject to a variety of critical factors, including but not limited to viable, realistic and well-defined mandates; political willingness, leadership, performance and accountability at all levels; sufficient financial and human resources; and policies, planning,

guidelines and operational training. In addition, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

In addition, the States members of the Movement reiterate the importance that they attach to discussion and the reports of the annual substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which is the only forum of the United Nations with a mandate to thoroughly consider every aspect of the issue of peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, we wish to state that the safety of United Nations mission personnel remains a matter of concern. We categorically condemn all attacks and acts of violence against peacekeepers, which saw a notable increase last year. Likewise, we call for all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that those responsible for such attacks are held accountable and brought to justice. In that regard, we, the 120 members of the Non-Aligned Movement, take this opportunity to pay tribute to and recognize the important work carried out by all peacekeeping personnel, men and women alike, who work in armed conflicts and, in many cases, in adverse conditions on the ground, risking their lives on a daily basis. We extend our sincere appreciation to all of them, including those who have lost their lives in operations on the ground, defending the flag of the United Nations and the cause of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on a successful presidency and on choosing this very timely and important subject as the theme of this open debate, at a time when peace and its keepers are facing difficult challenges.

Lebanon and the United Nations have been strategic partners regarding the question of peacekeeping for almost half a century, through the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). That interim period has lasted 40 years. The mandate of UNIFIL, as members of the Council are aware, is based on resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978) and resolution 1701 (2006). Today, UNIFIL has 10,500 troops from 41 countries, making it one of the largest United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. Moreover, the Lebanese Government committed 15,000 troops in 2006 to be deployed in southern Lebanon for the first time in 30 years.

In your concept note (S/2018/184, annex), Mr. President, you ask what host nations can do to help peacekeepers. I will answer that question by talking about the strategic relationship between Lebanon and UNIFIL. However, first allow me, on behalf of Lebanon, to say that we are very grateful to UNIFIL and every single country, many of which are represented around this table and in this Chamber, for their participation in the peacekeeping Mission. UNIFIL has lost 312 soldiers since 1978, and Lebanon will always be indebted and humbled by the sacrifice of the families of those soldiers and their countries.

The partnership between the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and UNIFIL has been consolidated and cemented since 2006, when the Lebanese army's fifth brigade deployed in the south to extend the Government's authority and ensure security and stability in the region. LAF and UNIFIL soldiers do routine patrols and work in close coordination on all issues related to security and stability in the area of operations. While the situation on the border is fragile, that partnership has helped to establish a new strategic environment in the south and, although it is not perfect, there is calm on the Blue Line. UNIFIL conducts land and maritime joint exercises with the LAF and contributes to mine clearing and mine awareness and education for local populations.

There are vital requirements for a host country to support and strengthen peacekeeping forces. I will now detail five of those requirements that the Lebanese Government has been fulfilling:

First, since the adoption of resolution 2373 (2017), the Lebanese Government has been working on establishing a model regiment to deploy in the south to further enhance the Lebanese Government's security presence in the area. The Rome conference was a concrete example of the Lebanese Government's commitment to strengthening its national military and security forces. That enables the Government to exert control over and assume responsibility for security in the country and ease the burden of peacekeepers.

Secondly, the Lebanese Government has shown strong will, resolve and unparalleled commitment to ensuring that UNIFIL succeeds in its mission.

Thirdly, Lebanese officials express their support for UNIFIL through the Lebanese Government's repeated public statements of support regarding resolution 1701 (2006) and its full implementation, with visits of high-

level officials to UNIFIL's headquarters and area of operations.

Fourthly, communication and good relations with the local population are equally important for the success of a peacekeeping operation, and Lebanon encourages such relationships. UNIFIL helps the local civilian population through many projects, such as quick impact projects, which address the most pressing needs of the population

Fifthly, one of the most strategically vital roles of a peacekeeping force is prevention. In that regard, Lebanon and the United Nations, through the Tripartite Committee, have been able to diffuse tension, solve problems, de-escalate and avoid conflict in southern Lebanon on an almost daily basis.

Twelve years after the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), we have seen no sign of progress on reaching a permanent ceasefire, solving the underlying political problems in the region, such as Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territory, or halting its daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty by land, air and sea. We in Lebanon are encouraged by the Secretary-General's peace and security architecture reform and support his endeavours, but what is needed is action from the Security Council that solves the political problems and tackles the root causes of issues. Open-ended peacekeeping operations do not end conflicts; implementing United Nations resolutions does.

The Security Council has to shoulder its responsibility and end the gridlock that has characterized its work for the past few years. Peacebuilding, prevention and coalescing around the will of a Security Council that works for permanent solutions and not security band aids is what will make durable peace a reality around the world, especially in the Middle East.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): The role of peacekeeping operations has evolved dramatically over the years. High expectations, coupled with greater resource constraints, have accentuated the difficulties missions face and have sometimes created frustration about the ability of peacekeeping operations to achieve their objectives. Brazil continues to believe in the capacity of United Nations peacekeeping operations to contribute significantly to the successful resolution of conflicts. However, change is required. We therefore thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate and welcome the Secretary-General's effort to renew dialogue on peacekeeping operations.

Peacekeeping is a unique instrument for dealing with conflicts. We hope that the reforms proposed by the Secretary-General will be implemented in such a way as to strengthen peacekeeping's integration with other instruments in a coherent way, while recognizing and preserving its distinctiveness.

The changes that we seek require action not only by the Security Council, but also by other bodies with responsibility for peacekeeping. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, in particular, offers a great opportunity for Member States to reflect upon and help strengthen, in a democratic setting, the fundamental political consensus that underpins peacekeeping partnerships. It should take responsibility for giving directions and not just reacting to predetermined decisions. During this year's session, the Special Committee requested the Secretariat to develop an integrated performance policy framework for mandate implementation, based on clear standards for all relevant civilian and uniformed personnel. The Special Committee has also encouraged the Secretariat to develop a clear, comprehensive and transparent procedure on caveats, in consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries.

Brazil welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts to address the increasing number of fatalities in peacekeeping operations, and we recognize the important contribution of the Santos Cruz report. We welcome its emphasis on the need to provide adequate resources, equipment and training to peacekeepers, particularly specialized training for specific threats. We also agree that a sense of shared responsibility is needed in the field. As highlighted by the Santos Cruz report, some units deployed tend to operate in isolation from others deployed in the same mission. By working together, contingents will contribute to a more efficient implementation of mandates and to decreasing the number of fatalities suffered by peacekeepers.

Civilian leadership and personnel also need to play a more active role in taking necessary preventive measures to avoid casualties, including by promoting greater situational awareness, achieving an appropriate mission footprint and guaranteeing that logistic decisions are needs-oriented.

The focus of the report on casualty reduction, however, should not lead to an understanding that an increase in the militarization of operations would be the main way to make them more effective. Brazil reiterates that the success of peacekeeping operations will be determined not solely by the actions taken by military components, but also by their capacity to protect and sustain peace and to create an environment conducive to long-term political solutions. The success of peacekeeping missions also depends on the existence of achievable mandates and, most importantly, on the political will of regional actors and the international community.

In our effort to improve peacekeeping, we must not fail to recognize the contributions achieved through that tool. The recent downsizing or closing of missions, such as in the cases of Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, where missions have created conditions conducive for peace and security, show the positive effect that United Nations operations continue to have, bringing hope for a better future to millions of people.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Plasai (Thailand): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Her Excellency Minister Marsudi of Indonesia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Today's meeting and briefings underscore two important points. First, the endeavour of peacekeeping is a collective commitment and, secondly, peacekeeping operations now deploy in increasingly complex operating environments.

We congratulate the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on its 2018 substantive session, which has produced a meaningful draft report (A/AC.121/2018/L.3) that touches upon the issues of troop performance and accountability for the first time. We wish to underline the following key elements.

First, planning is the first important step. Peacekeeping mandates must be planned thoroughly and be achievable, realistic, context-specific and flexible. The careful planning of mission transition and post-mission United Nations support should also be in place from an early stage. It is also necessary for all stakeholders to exchange information based on a frank and clear situation assessment. Mandates must be commensurate with an adequate level of financial and human resources to support an effective and efficient discharge of mandated tasks, including equipment and other assets.

Secondly, the efficient and effective achievement of mandate outcomes depends on the qualities and capabilities of peacekeepers. Ensuring that peacekeepers meet national, international and United Nations standards is important. The Kingdom of Thailand works towards that goal before and during deployment. It should be everyone's priority. Both predeployment and in-field training require a management approach that is systematic, as an integral part of operational planning. Towards that end, Thailand is committed to ensuring that all its peacekeepers, including the new horizontal military engineering company that will soon join the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, are properly prepared, trained and equipped in order to meet the diverse challenges that they may face in the field.

Thirdly, developing and aligning a common understanding among stakeholders is key to ensuring that the mandate's objectives are met and delivered effectively. In that regard, we must stress the importance of close consultations and communication among the Security Council, host countries, troop- and police-contributing countries and other relevant agencies in a timely, appropriate and flexible manner. It is also important that mission mandates be aligned with and supportive of national priorities. The emphasis should be on utilizing the existing mechanisms in the society to build positive resilience and long-term drivers of peace.

Fourthly, we need stronger partnerships. Enhancing the capacities of regional and subregional organizations is essential. We must also ensure enhanced dialogue among the regional and subregional organizations and the Security Council, as well as other United Nations bodies, in order to achieve synergy and ensure complementarity.

Last but not least, active listening and an open mind in seeking new ideas and being creative are essential to ensuring that peacekeeping operations are fit for purpose. As a concrete example of concerted action on useful new ideas, the Kingdom of Thailand has joined others in a Group of Friends to support the management of the environmental footprint of field missions throughout their life cycle. We are convinced that a lighter footprint will allow for cost efficiencies,

the improved safety and security of peacekeeping troops and a better overall delivery of the mandate.

In conclusion, good planning, adequate resourcing and competent personnel are imperative to the success of any peacekeeping operation. It is our fervent hope that we continue our efforts in that direction and continue to share ideas and experiences in order to further improve our collective peacekeeping action.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Noke (Japan) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to thank the Netherlands presidency for its initiative in organizing this timely open debate today following the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), various high-level meetings of Member States and discussions in the Security Council, including the adoption of resolution 2378 (2017).

My Government appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General to ensure that peacekeeping missions can implement their mandates more effectively and continues to support the various United Nations actions, such as improving the security of peacekeepers, the protection of civilians and the role of women. In that regard,

Japan associates itself with the activities and statements of the Group of Friends to which it belongs.

(*spoke in English*)

Japan also stresses that political efforts are of the utmost importance for resolving conflicts, as demonstrated by resolution 2406 (2018), which renewed the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, clearly emphasizing the importance of supporting the peace process as the Mission's mandate.

In order for United Nations peacekeeping operations to implement their mandates while ensuring the safety and security of their staff in today's complex operational environments, peacekeepers must be sufficiently equipped and trained. Since 2008, Japan has supported peacekeeping centres in 13 African countries. Furthermore, with the participation of Brazil and Switzerland, Japan has supported the capacity-building of United Nations peacekeepers under the triangular partnership project of the United Nations, troop-contributing countries and supporting Member States.

As part of that project, since 2015 Japan has provided training in Kenya on the operation and maintenance of heavy engineering equipment to 130 future peacekeeping engineers from five African countries. Engineering is a critically important enabler for the security of personnel by improving the physical security and mobility of peacekeeping missions. The triangular partnership project will be enhanced and expanded to other regions and capabilities. As our Foreign Minister, Mr. Taro Kono, said last September, the training will be provided to countries in the Indo-Pacific region given that more than 30 per cent of peacekeepers are from that region (see S/PV.8051).

Moreover, medical capabilities are essential to safety and security. I echo the Cruz report in that regard. Japan has already supported the United Nations in the standardization of buddy-aid training and will support the training of medical personnel in Africa under the triangular partnership project.

Resolution 2378 (2017) and the corresponding letter to the Secretary-General (S/2017/766) emphasize the importance of effective and efficient training and capacity-building. The triangular partnership enables role-sharing among Member States to develop capable peacekeepers. Japan strongly encourages Member States to participate in the partnership. With their involvement, such training efforts will be a sustainable way to share our skills and experience.

With regard to training and capacity-building, I would like to emphasize the importance of the linkage between force generation and training and capacity-building. The Secretariat also needs to assess mission-specific needs for effective training and capacity-building.

(*spoke in French*)

I mentioned the need for collective and concrete actions by all stakeholders to tackle challenges in peacekeeping. Under the banner of a proactive contribution to peace, Japan will continue its concrete contributions to making peacekeeping more effective and more efficient in response to today's challenges.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Stener (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

We warmly welcome the initiative of the Netherlands to organize this open debate on how to strengthen United Nations peace operations. Let me also thank the Secretary-General for outlining his vision and proposed timeline. I am also grateful to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and to Ms. Fatimata Touré for their valuable contributions today. The Nordic countries would like to make four points.

First, the success or failure of a peace operation is defined primarily by whether it helps to bring about a sustainable and peaceful settlement of the conflict. All missions must therefore be guided by a clear political strategy. They need to have the full backing of the Security Council, the contributing countries, regional actors and the host nation in order to fulfil that strategy. Consultations about when and how to deploy an operation should involve all stakeholders, including troop- and police-contributing countries. It is also important to consult with regional and subregional organizations, most notably the African Union. In that regard, we welcome the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security as a basis for further deepening that partnership.

Secondly, missions must be mandated, planned and designed in response to each specific context. A gender-sensitive and whole-of-system approach should guide that process. Our goal should be to reduce the gap between expectations and the ability to deliver. The new practice of conducting independent reviews of missions is a major step towards a more strategic approach. Those reviews can be used by the Security Council when drafting and revising mandates in order to ensure that they are better prioritized and sequenced. Close coordination among those who mandate, plan, manage and implement operations is necessary. We welcome this month's agreement on guidelines to improve the existing mechanisms of triangular cooperation, and we call on all parties to use them actively.

Thirdly, United Nations missions must be better adapted to the increasingly complex and high-risk environments in which they operate. The Nordic countries fully support the Secretary-General's plan of action to follow-up on the report authored by former United Nations Force Commander Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*, to address crucial safety and security concerns. Uniformed units must have the right training, skills and equipment to be able to protect themselves and deliver on their mandate. We must collectively seek to measure and improve performance at all levels and for all categories of personnel. The zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse must be fully respected and implemented. We can reach those goals only by working together.

Lastly, the Nordic countries are firm backers of the Secretary-General's ambition to double the number of women peacekeepers. We support the goal of reaching a ratio of 15 per cent women among military officers and 20 per cent women among police officers in United Nations operations by 2020. We strongly believe that an increase in the number of women peacekeepers will have a positive effect on the ability of United Nations operations to deliver on their mandates

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho Tae-yul (Republic of Korea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Ethiopia, Norway and my own country, the Republic of Korea. Our three countries are leading the group of friends of United Nations peace operations, an informal cross-regional group dedicated to making peace operations more fit-for-purpose. We thank the Netherlands for convening this open debate on such an important topic. We also join others in thanking the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action for their informative briefings.

The report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), together with other recent reports, presents a clear set of recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of United Nations peace operations. It is high time that all relevant actors — the Security Council, contributing countries, regional actors, the Secretariat and host countries — come together and implement them in a strategic and holistic manner. For that reason, we fully support the Secretary-General's action plan for peacekeeping, which mobilizes all partners and stakeholders to support the effectiveness of peace operations. Today, we would like to raise five points.

First, United Nations peacekeeping operations should better support political processes led by local actors. Mandates should be more focused and realistic based on an accurate and in-depth analysis by the Secretariat of the specific context. Mandates should also

be designed as part of a broader political strategy that considers the entire peace continuum from prevention and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development. The political strategy, in tandem with the United Nations development assistance framework, could guide efforts to determine the division of labour among missions, United Nations country teams and other relevant actors. The Peacebuilding Commission is also well placed to advise the Security Council in following up on peacebuilding components, especially during transitions.

Secondly, we need to ensure that peacekeeping missions operate more effectively in today's complex and high-risk environments. As peacekeeping casualties have hit a historic high level, both the Secretariat and contributing countries need to prioritize the safety and security of peacekeepers. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's plan of action to address such concerns, while upholding the basic principles of peacekeeping. The capabilities of peacekeeping operations must also be an enhanced to better meet their mandates. Intelligence, the introduction of new technology and increased engagement with local communities to ensure local ownership need to be considered.

Thirdly, faced by multidimensional challenges, effective peacekeeping requires the shared responsibility of all actors, including regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU), that are leading many political processes. In that regard, we welcome Secretary-General Guterres' commitment to strengthening the strategic partnership, especially with the African Union, by holding the first summit-level United Nations-AU annual conference, among others.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General's initiative to reform the peace and security architecture provides a critical opportunity to strengthen peacekeeping operations. We should ensure that ongoing reform efforts, together with those of the management and development system, result in a coherent holistic approach of United Nations activities on the ground.

Lastly, the culture of dialogue should be promoted for frank and constructive discussions on peacekeeping among the relevant actors, including the Security Council, contributing countries, the Secretariat and host nations. For, when the stakes are high, walking together becomes an imperative.

Ethiopia, Norway and the Republic of Korea together, with other friends of United Nations peace operations, remain committed to working closely with the Secretariat and the wider membership to identifying solutions and facilitating dialogue to improve peace operations in the months to come.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): I thank Prime Minister Rutte and the Netherlands for convening today's timely debate. I also thank the Secretary-General and the other briefers whom we heard this morning.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

This year Ireland marks the sixtieth anniversary of its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Not one year or one month has passed since that date without Irish troops wearing the blue helmet abroad. It is part of who we are at the United Nations. With 86 Irish soldiers having lost their lives in the service of such missions, Ireland is in no doubt as to the significance of this debate. Unfortunately, such losses are becoming all too frequent. It is our responsibility to determine how to prevent such sacrifices.

This is not the first time that we have considered the issue. Previous discussions have demonstrated that, although we are often frank about our shortcomings, we are less adept at addressing them. Repeatedly, we have acknowledged the disconnect between mandates and strategic direction and between mandates and adequate resources. For peacekeeping missions to be successful and for peacekeepers to be safe, missions must be more than a means for demonstrating political resolve. They must be a meaningful tool for the attainment of peace.

Mandates must match the needs presented by the conflict, resources must match the mandate, and they must be reinforced by political support. Strategic reviews of peace operations are a welcome additional tool for ensuring that operations remain fit-for-purpose. However, we must ensure that proper analysis is conducted at the very outset so that, from conception to implementation, we are assured that mandates are designed and operations resourced to meet the real security challenges that such missions face on the ground. Equally, we must be transparent and open when we identify failures. Only by learning from our mistakes and holding ourselves accountable can we

ensure that our words of support in this Chamber are not hollow and that mistakes are not repeated. That goes to the heart of the credibility of the Security Council.

The report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*, highlights the incoherence that often exists between mandates and capabilities. That is not a bureaucratic or theoretical concern. If we continue to fail to act on that call, we will, as the Cruz report states, be responsible for consciously putting our personnel in harm's way. Effective, focused and appropriately resourced operations drive efficient operations. We must ensure that our drive for efficiencies does not blind us to that fact. Key regional partner organizations, such as the European Union, are developing capability platforms that could help address some of the resource challenges that United Nations peacekeeping missions face. Ireland is ready to work with the United Nations in the framework of permanent, structured cooperation to develop and utilize those tools for the benefit of all.

Effectiveness is also strengthened through the increased participation of women as peacekeepers — an aim to which Ireland is committed — along with doubling female participation in our defence forces. Ireland recently co-hosted an event in the Netherlands with the Dutch Foreign Ministry, which focused on the challenges that remain in addressing structural and societal barriers to such participation. We need to listen more to those women peacekeepers in the field to allow us to strategically effect change. Similarly we need to be more strategic on the issue of capacity. We all know that training is a key issue, and many Members have provided offers in that area. We now need to identify where gaps continue to exist and consider how best to address them. Now more than ever, the United Nations needs to demonstrate that it is capable of fulfilling its obligations. That requires developing the capacities of those on whom we call to carry out that role.

Responding to and addressing conflict demands the use of the widest possible range of tools and instruments Security is just one step on the path to peace. To that end, Ireland fully supports the Secretary-General's reform efforts, in particular to increase emphasis on prevention and political strategies. The most effective means at our disposal for the protection of our citizens and the protection of our peacekeepers is taking action that means they never need to be deployed.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Netherlands for convening this timely high-level open debate, since it offers us the opportunity to highlight the importance of collective partnership in the implementation and improvement of the mandates of the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In 2016, the number of violent conflicts in the world was the highest in the past 30 years. The high percentages of conflicts within States persist, resulting in the unfortunate loss of human life, setbacks in development levels and tensions over human rights and the environment, among others. Moreover, the report on deaths and injuries resulting from violence in peacekeeping operations, presented by Lieutenant General Santos Cruz to the Secretary-General last December, states that in 2016 the number of such incidents was the highest since 1994.

This time of major challenges to the performance of peacekeeping operations on the ground and the expectation of implementation of the Secretary-General's reform proposals make it appropriate to recall and take inventory of the recommendations from the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) to improve peacekeeping operations. Political options should be favoured. Peacekeeping operations should be enabled to carry out multidimensional preventive and peacebuilding actions. Security, development and human rights solutions should be channelled and the role of women in peace underscored. Humanitarian issues should be addressed, having communities and individuals as the ultimate purpose of their activities throughout all phases of the peace continuum, in partnership with relevant actors and in close cooperation with host States.

General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, confirmed those recommendations and are at the centre of the Secretary-General's proposal to reform the architecture and in that way to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of the United Nations system, including the peacekeeping operations. Those consensuses are the centre of the strategy to design and oversee the mandates that the Security Council must forge to improve peacekeeping operations. The Council must commit to constantly

reviewing the mandates to ensure that they are in line with current needs and that the security of the members of the operations can be guaranteed.

We echo the recommendations of the Secretary-General that the Security Council should be asked to place greater emphasize on the mandates of the peacekeeping operations being clear, realistic and up to date, as well as having well-identified priorities and sequential and flexible timelines, which can change and adjust according to the realities on the ground. We hope that, within the framework of the Secretary-General's review of peacekeeping operations, the Council will consider those recommendations to improve the political process behind the creation, updating, transitioning and withdrawal of the operations.

The discussions in the context of this year's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) reaffirmed that that is the path to take, but they also recognized that the improvement of the peacekeeping operations still has a long way to go and goals still to meet. The Council needs to have greater and improved interaction with other organs of the Organization, field-based country teams, military- and police-contributing countries, financial contributors, regional organizations and recipient countries, among others, so that we can maximize the efficiency, effectiveness and security of their members, as well as to allocate adequate, timely and predictable resources to operations. Without those elements, it will be difficult for the operations to fully and effectively fulfil their mandates and contribute to the efficiency and image of the United Nations on the ground.

The C-34 also showed that disagreements among Member States regarding financial issues remains one of the major gaps in the implementation of all the recommendations over the past two years. That affects the feasibility of implementing the proposals and those contained in the United Nations action plan to reduce fatalities due to acts of violence against peacekeeping operations staff.

The Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund are two strategic allies of the Council in promoting such collective action with a strategic and coherent approach. They serve as a hinge among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and generally among the peace and security and development and human rights pillars of the Organization, so that prevention, comprehensive approaches that address the deep structural causes of the conflicts, mediation and peacebuilding may be the vehicle by which we truly achieve sustainable peace.

That is the real paradigm shift of the United Nations. It is here in the Security Council, with all States, that we must focus our efforts. Since 2015, Mexico has again joined the peacekeeping operations out of conviction and because it is aware of the contribution we can make to sustainable peace in the world, and also because Mexico is a stakeholder that complies with and assumes its global responsibility. Mexico will continue to support those operations and to join the collective action to strengthen them.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me begin by thanking you, Madam President, and the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening this open debate. We are also grateful for the concept note (S/2018/184, annex) that serves as the basis for our deliberations.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

We believe in the importance of creating spaces to discuss ways to improve the participation of all actors in support of the Organization's peacekeeping operations with the understanding that this is a shared responsibility and a strategic multilateral partnership, especially with regard to the host States, with the support of the Secretariat, regional organizations, the Security Council and Member States. The latter include, of course, troop- and police-contributing countries.

Furthermore, this open debate is quite timely, as we are witnessing an increase in attacks on staff of peacekeeping operations in various missions. In following up, my delegation takes note of the report of Lieutenant General Santos Cruz as a response to the five most lethal years for the Organization's peacekeeping soldiers and police officers. The report's recommendations include, inter alia, instituting a much more robust military response to armed threats, including an eventual willingness to attack first and

confront the attackers where they lurk, rather than waiting behind the walls of peacekeeping bases.

With regard to robust responses, Guatemala reaffirms its position that the use of force must always be the last resort, especially when acting on behalf of the United Nations. While we fully understand the reasons why mandates calling for more robust operations have been developed, especially when the protection of civilians is at stake, it is our view that such action under the aegis of the United Nations should be carefully considered by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in order to analyse its scope.

It is essential for the Security Council to be clear that one of its main responsibilities is to provide peacekeeping operations with realistic mandates. Given the reality on the ground, some mandates are not always adapted to the specific context of the mission in question and, in some cases, are not entirely obtainable. To achieve the desired impact, the Security Council could carry out a better analysis of the situation on the ground and set objectives that can be met.

With regard to host countries, the Council has a key role to play. Regrettably, the international community has witnessed situations where host countries go back on their agreements or violate international law and international humanitarian law. That is unacceptable by any standards.

In conclusion, we should recall that one of the most powerful preventive tools is early involvement on the part of the Security Council. In that regard, in addition to the information provided by the Secretariat, the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission could be a useful tool. We have seen that when the Council is decisive and united, it not only sends an unambiguous political message, it can also make use of the resources at its disposal to prevent specific situations on the ground from deteriorating further.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are pleased to see you presiding over today's meeting, Madam. On behalf of Argentina, I thank the Netherlands for having convened this open debate on a topic that is of particular interest to us, in view of our regular participation as a troop- and police-contributing country, which began exactly 60 years ago. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of the non-governmental organization Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action for their important briefings to the Council.

Argentina agrees with the concept note for this debate (S/2018/184, annex) with regard to the need for all parties concerned to renew their commitment to peacekeeping operations as an essential political tool of the Organization for the maintenance of international peace and security. We stress the importance of having a clear joint strategy on the challenges, expectations, resources and requirements for missions' effective performance in fulfilling their mandates.

We believe that the recent substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations was a positive step in that direction. One of the issues discussed in that session was the security of missions, particularly as it relates to the report submitted by Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz. In addition to supporting the general framework of that report, we understand that the main change that has contributed to an increase in peacekeeping deaths is that the most recent missions have been established in unstable, complex and high-risk situations where there is no peace to maintain. That is why in recent years the main challenge to peacekeeping operations has been to adapt to those operational circumstances and the mandates assigned to them.

The incorporation of mandates on the protection of civilians into peacekeeping operations has been one of the most important developments regarding peacekeeping missions that we have seen this century. We reiterate that the issue should not be considered from a strictly military perspective, but should rather be part of a broader political and humanitarian approach centred on building a safe, protected environment. We believe that it is crucial that all Member States continue moving towards a clear and common understanding of the modalities and implications of such activities, particularly in cases where it is necessary to use force to provide security to civilians who are threatened by physical violence, in accordance with missions' mandates and the rules of engagement.

Argentina reiterates its commitment to the Organization's zero-tolerance policy for cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as its support for the measures adopted by the Secretary-General in

that regard. Along with more than 80 countries, we have joined the Voluntary Compact on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. We also support the Canadian-led Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations, in the understanding that increasing the number of female Blue Helmets would make missions more effective.

In line with the Secretary-General's holistic take on the pillars of peace and security, development and human rights, which is also reflected in his recent report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43), we believe that peacekeeping operations, as part of the United Nations system, can assist host countries in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while simultaneously attending to the needs of populations and working towards longer-term goals for resolving conflicts. We also stress that missions should include enablers who would assist host countries in the area of infrastructure, especially when that could help to protect civilians. The experience of the Argentinian hospital in Haiti demonstrated that it was possible to expand its work into the community and thereby generate empathy without undermining its effectiveness.

Argentina underlines the need for missions that are more effective and flexible, with clear mandates and parameters both for their personnel and for host countries, with planning done sufficiently in advance and based on priorities established from the beginning in consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries, with better specific capabilities and specially trained personnel and, crucially, with the necessary financial resources for carrying out their mandated tasks satisfactorily. However, we are witnessing a growing tendency in the Organization to expect better performances from peacekeeping operations doing larger numbers of jobs in increasingly risky and complex operational environments, while at the same time attempts are being made to freeze or reduce their general level of funding. If Member States truly want to improve the effectiveness and performance of the peacekeeping system, we should analyse ways to generate ideas and alternatives to do that. The system has its advantages and is broadly supported by the international community.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the personnel of the United Nations who have lost their lives in carrying out their peacekeeping duties. Reflecting on their sacrifice should encourage us to consider the best ways to renew our collective commitment to peacekeeping operations.

Mr. Moragas Sánchez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Spain advocates for an active and robust role for the United Nations in conflict prevention, political mediation and conflict resolution. This Organization has a unique added value, the product of its broad legitimacy amd its extraordinary ability to open avenues to dialogue in multiple scenarios. With that it has been able to create an unstoppable dynamic of peace.

We believe that current crises must be tackled with a more realistic and effective approach. That means that all the parties concerned must make courageous decisions. In that regard, we appreciate the direct and frank tone of the report of Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz on the security of United Nations missions. The document has the virtue of departing from bureaucratic rhetoric and focusing on a transparent analysis of the issues. The ensuing action plan and mission reviews will strengthen an approach that seeks not to assign blame but to find common solutions. That said, I have six brief observations with regard to the Secretary-General's reform of the peace and security pillar of the United Nations

First, we must strengthen the systems for mission planning and operations. We must ensure that the legal basis for missions, their mandates, are adapted to the reality of a particular crisis and are clear and orderly in their implementation. The interested parties must have measurable goals, through performance indicators, that respond to conditions that are decisive, defined and attainable.

Secondly, we must reinforce capacities. Current crises demand new capabilities. Concepts such as force protection, appropriate predeployment training, combating improvised explosive devices, intelligence, offensive capacity, adequate equipment and an effective system of lessons learned, among others, are of particular importance in this context. Mission contingents are not United Nations armies, as the Secretary-General rightly noted this morning in his statement, but neither should they be a mere collection of capacities or a disparate accumulation of troops. We must have an acceptable level of force cohesion and interoperability, and that is a challenge that we must tackle together.

Thirdly, we must optimize resources. The current crises require us to look for synergies among international organizations, regional organizations and other bodies operating in conflict zones, including the security and defence forces of host States. In the Sahel region, the bilateral operations and European Union operations — the European Union Training Missions in Mali and the Central African Republic — are successful examples that show the viability of this approach. The work of all of those missions has benefited the United Nations peacekeeping operations, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. We must continue and deepen the search for those complementarities.

Fourthly, we must strengthen the political dimension of missions. The achievement, maintenance and consolidation of peace should be the result of a structured and continuous process that meets its objectives through realistic strategies until it arrives at a stable and sustainable State. We must ensure that the institutions of the host State can design their own future and maintain their own security. We need to establish clear exit strategies for missions. In short, politics must always be a permanent and cross-cutting dimension in the actions of the United Nations, because we all know that the United Nations must not and cannot do everything, everywhere, or at all times.

Fifthly, if there is no force protection, the force cannot protect civilians. The majority of current missions have a wide range of mechanisms aimed at supporting States in their responsibility to protect civilians. The strengthening of national capacities to ensure the necessary accountability for atrocious crimes is included in their mandates. That is why predeployment training and the identification of threats at the planning phase are essential. Spain also calls for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all phases of a mission, and we welcome the work being done by child protection and women's protection advisers. Their interaction with the parties to a conflict is key to achieving changes in the mindset of State actors and armed groups. We believe that more women should be deployed in peace missions and in leadership positions, as outlined in Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), not only because women have added value in the protection of civilians, but also because of the unquestionable role they play in early warning, capacity-building and contributing to the development of more cohesive and inclusive societies.

Finally, we should all support a zero-tolerance policy in cases of exploitation and sexual abuse. The legitimacy of the United Nations and the ultimate purpose of the missions are at stake. That is why Spain has signed the Compact introduced by the Secretary-General. The current President of Spain, Mariano Rajoy Brey, is a member of the circle of trust to combat this phenomenon.

I should not conclude without expressing the unequivocal and decisive support of Spain for the work done by the human rights components of these missions. Considering the risk before us that a world undergoing change could become a world in decline, the United Nations is now more necessary than ever. This Organization is facing the major challenge of committing to in-depth reform that is multidimensional, coherent, timely, bold and balanced. Our most universal Spaniard, Miguel de Cervantes, said that "to change the world ... is not utopia or madness. It is justice". I recall that today in particular because the reform that we are undertaking is essential.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Lal (India): We thank the presidency of the Netherlands for convening today's open debate, the first this year on the topic of peacekeeping. We are meeting against the backdrop of the previous year, which saw the highest number of fatalities due to attacks among United Nations peacekeepers since 1994.

The questions regarding the limitations of United Nations peacekeeping operations continue to confront us, as several complex missions show little signs of resolution. The issue has been debated here long enough. Several expert reports on it exist, and the reasons for the situation are very clear. Besides the changing nature of armed conflicts themselves, they include serious, chronic shortcomings resulting from a lack of clarity in mandates, a mismatch in the resources available to peacekeepers, inadequate consultations with troop-contributing countries and a lack of focus on political solutions to building and sustaining peace. These are all well known.

However, a coherent approach to jointly addressing these reasons continues to elude us, while we continue to look for shortcuts and focus narrowly only on

enhancing efficiency, effecting savings, improving logistics or expanding the availability of troops and their rapid deployment. We are still not addressing the core issues. What is actually missing is the political will to acknowledge and implement many of the recommendations.

On the question of mandates, of the 15 current peacekeeping missions, six have 15 or more mandate components and five have between seven and 10. We would like to know if there are any assessments of whether such missions can do justice to all their mandated components with the limited resources available to them. Several recent mandate renewals have once again shown the limitations of a process that continues to be led by a few and is primarily driven by numbers and individual national agendas rather than by the aim of providing adequate resources for realistic mandates.

The Council could utilize its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations to debate and agree on strategic objectives for the missions, design mandates and monitor the capacity to achieve them. The Working Group could submit recommendations after engaging with a broad range of actors, including the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries. The Council could review and modify mandates when needs on the ground shift, rather than waiting until the mandate cycles end.

I now want to turn to the very serious concern of the increasing loss of lives of United Nations peacekeepers due to attacks on missions. In the past four years, of the 176 fatalities due to acts of violence, 43 were the result of attacks by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). We believe that missions facing such threats should have dedicated resources for countering IED threats. There should be concerted efforts to upgrade the security infrastructure of the camps. Capabilities for timely and reliable medical and casualty evacuation, including the use of helicopters with night-flight capability and night-retrieval operations, are essential. In addition, force commanders should be given direct command over such air assets for missions in order to respond in a timely manner to crisis situations and accidents.

An issue that is much discussed is the importance of greater female participation in peacekeeping. However, actual progress in this regard still leaves a lot be desired. According to the latest data of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the overall percentage of female United Nations military observers and staff officers is currently around 8 per cent. India, the first country to contribute a women formed police unit to peacekeeping, is one of only 26 countries that have reached the goal of 15 per cent for women military observers and staff officers. The fact remains that most other countries have yet to reach that target.

With its long experience in United Nations peacekeeping, India believes that peacekeeping's success should be judged on missions' ability to sustain peace by enabling political solutions through integrated responses. That is, of course, the shared responsibility of the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries. We hope that the collective political will to address peacekeeping's well-known challenges effectively will emerge sooner rather than later.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Netherlands on its successful presidency of the Security Council this month.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, which consists of 50 member States and the European Union and is co-chaired this year by Italy, in the framework of a split term with the Netherlands and the State of Qatar.

The Group would like to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for bringing the very important issue of peacekeeping to the forefront of discussions in the Council. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of the non-governmental organization Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action for their very useful and important briefings.

This is the first time that the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect has made a statement in an open debate in the Security Council. While it is clear that protecting civilians is the primary responsibility of Governments, the protection of civilians has become a central element of many peacekeeping missions' mandates, as we have heard. United Nations peacekeeping missions often have a broad range of mechanisms aimed at supporting and assisting States in strengthening the protection of civilians,

rebuilding communities and creating the conditions for sustainable peace. Many missions have been given mandates pertaining to the rule of law in order to help ensure accountability for atrocity crimes, including by strengthening national capacities and supporting national, hybrid and international courts and justice mechanisms. Against that backdrop, the Group of Friends would like to stress the following three points.

First, threats of violence against civilians should inform planning and decision-making in peacekeeping operations. Strengthening the links between threat-based assessments, planning and decision-making can enable stronger mandate implementation and strengthen the protection of civilians.

Secondly, the States Members of the United Nations and the Secretariat should enable United Nations peacekeeping operations to improve their analytical skills by providing them with adequate tools that can help identify threats as they emerge. Better awareness of emerging threats can result in an improved ability to respond effectively before a situation escalates. In that context, tools such as the United Nations Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes can help to analyse conditions that may increase the likelihood of atroUnited Nations Logocities or trigger their commission. We recognize and encourage the important role of women generally and female peacekeepers in particular in the prevention of atrocity crimes, as active actors in the areas of early warning, promoting cooperation, capacity-building and creating more cohesive and inclusive societies.

Lastly, the effective implementation of peacekeeping mandates requires a shared responsibility among all stakeholders to support efforts to deliver peace and security, including partnerships with regional organizations and arrangements, as appropriate, and enhanced partnerships among United Nations entities. As we have seen all over the world, regional and subregional arrangements can play a key role in leading international responses to mass atrocities. We hope that through this forum we can identify strategies that can protect men, women and children more effectively and help implement our joint commitment to protecting and promoting human rights, including as embodied in the concept of the responsibility to protect.

I would now like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

Italy aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union and the statement made earlier by the representative of Canada on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women and Peace and Security.

I would once again like to emphasize that the protection of civilians, conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace have become the fundamental concepts for peacekeeping today, and they represent the way forward. The Kigali and Vancouver Principles should be fully implemented by peace operations, particularly with regard to child protection. We also encourage the Secretary-General to advance his vision of a peace continuum in which our primary goal must be the quest for political solutions. And we support an enhanced role for the Peacebuilding Support Office in integrating peace and security with development and human rights. In that regard, we believe that the police component can play a crucial role in facilitating the transition from peacekeeping to more robust development assistance and peacebuilding, as is noted in resolution 2382 (2017), which we helped to adopt last year.

The African Union Mission in Somalia and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel are successful examples of cooperation with regional organizations. They also confirm that we need enhanced strategic cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in order to ensure effective and cost-efficient peace operations and strengthen African capabilities in that area. We are in favour of the use of United Nations-assessed contributions for African-led peace operations, provided that appropriate standards for troop quality, financial transparency, human rights compliance, conduct and discipline are met.

Italy is one of the most generous contributors to the peacekeeping budget and the leading contributor of Blue Helmets in the Group of Western and other States. As a troop-contributing country, we are very concerned about peacekeepers' safety and security. We consider the report of Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, and its action plan, as well as the independent mission reviews, to be timely and helpful measures.

Technology is key to increasing the safety and security of peacekeepers. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has provided the Mission with enhanced

situational awareness and played a key role in providing safety and security for peacekeepers as well as protection for civilians and humanitarian actors.

Training is also crucial to the effective implementation of mandates. Peacekeepers need specific training in order to do their job better. That is why the pledges for peacekeeping that Italy has made this year include a series of training courses developed by the Security Force Assistance Centre and Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza. I would also like to briefly mention Italy and Bangladesh's creation of the Group of Friends of the Management of the Environmental Impact of Field Missions Throughout Their Life Cycle. Nor should we forget logistics. Peacekeeping operations' capacity to deliver on and fulfil their mandates is closely related to the speed of their deployment and the operational effectiveness of field missions. Italy fully supports the United Nations Global Service Centre in Brindisi. It is an essential hub providing logistical support to peacekeeping missions around the world.

Lastly, ensuring a more inclusive involvement of troop- and police-contributing countries when the Security Council is reviewing mandates is key to reviving a sense of shared responsibility. The Council should always remember to give due consideration to the views of those countries, whose men and women are risking their lives on the ground and to whom I would like to pay the most respectful tribute, especially those who have lost their lives over the years.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Munir (Pakistan): I too would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam, and the Netherlands on a very successful presidency and for convening today's very important debate.

We would also like to begin be welcoming the Action for Peacekeeping initiative announced by the Secretary-General earlier today. We are in broad agreement with its six priority areas.

With the operating environment becoming ever more volatile, we are hearing increasing calls to update our tools for dealing with contemporary challenges, responding to current threats and doing our job better. We hope that our discussion today will provide valuable insights on all these issues. I would like to focus on two specific questions — peacekeeping as a shared responsibility and strategic coherence in the pursuit of political solutions.

Negotiations in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations this year were particularly focused on performance, and rightly. How else can we gauge success? However, performance cannot be evaluated solely in terms of what our troops on the ground do or do not accomplish. It also depends on resources, capabilities, intelligence and many such factors that troop-contributing countries (TCCs) do not control. The TCCs have never shied away from discussing performance, personnel, training and equipment. Performance policies, however, should be devised in consultation with the TCCs. The only conversation that can yield results is one that deals with performance in a holistic manner.

The Secretariat has the responsibility of providing pragmatic and realistic analysis of the situation on ground in terms of the political environment, resource gaps and possible exit strategies. The Council then has to reflect that information in its mandates. Rather than focusing merely on cutting costs and troop numbers, operations should dictate logistics, and not the other way around. I would like to point to a particular example relating to the vital task of the protection of civilians, which requires specific enablers and capacities. The recent pilot project on protection by projection in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo showed that it is extremely challenging to carry out protection-of-civilians tasks based only on a projected show of power. It is the job of the Secretariat and the Council to clearly articulate specific tasks such as the protection of civilians in terms of expectations and the requisite resources and capabilities. If resources are shrinking, expectations will have to be adjusted accordingly.

With regard to strategic coherence in the pursuit of political solutions, let me make three points. First, we have all talked about the primacy of politics and the need for a greater focus on political solutions. Peacekeeping missions, especially those with multidimensional mandates, are on the ground to facilitate post-conflict peacebuilding and help to make progress towards sustainable peace. The peacekeepers are not there to negotiate political solutions or enforce peace. They are there more as tools to support political processes. Secondly, the inclusion of regional partners in political processes could be a force multiplier and should be used as such. Thirdly, investing in mediation

is, of course, a sound investment. Without that, we risk making the whole exercise self-defeating.

The Secretary-General's reform initiatives envisage changes within the Secretariat's reporting lines. We hope that these reforms will make the provision of logistical support to missions better and quicker. Reform should not just talk about the performance and mindsets of troop- and police-contributing countries; it should also include a rethink of the Secretariat's performance in bringing out the true picture on the ground and, as the Secretary-General has said, of the Council's mindset in putting together achievable and realistic mandates.

Since the 1960s, Pakistan has contributed more than 200,000 troops to 43 missions and has lost 156 of its bravest in the pursuit of peace. We are fully committed to United Nations peacekeeping and are ready to engage in any process or discussion, from political strategy to operational issues, to help United Nations peacekeeping match the changing conflicts and threats.

The President: I now give the floor to the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Ms. Adamson: I thank you, Madam President, for holding this open debate.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement. I will give a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which is being circulated now.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing and would like to convey the EU's strong support for his efforts to make the ability of the United Nations to deliver on the ground more effective and efficient.

I would first like to pay tribute to the thousands of peacekeepers who have been putting their lives in harm's way for more than 70 years. We owe them a frank debate and determined action to ensure that peacekeeping operations can effectively deliver on their mandates and that our Blue Helmets are provided with the means to perform. Recent reports, from the 2015 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations report (see S/2015/446) to the Santos Cruz and Cammaert recommendations, highlight the need for change in order to ensure successful peacekeeping operations in very complex and challenging environments. We concur with the Secretary-General's call for the United Nations to become less risk-averse when it comes to innovation and to continually test new ideas, building on lessons learned.

The experience with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) represents a combination of efforts we have never seen before. The EU and the United Nations have come together to support an African Union-mandated African initiative through a channelling mechanism for financial contributions that also enables third parties to engage. By supporting the G5 Sahel Joint Force in its efforts to tackle terrorism, organized crime, people-smuggling and human trafficking in the region and thereby improve the overall security situation in Mali and beyond, we are also acting in support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). At the same time, the EU is providing financial reimbursement for MINUSMA's support to the G5 Sahel, as well as supporting the G5 Sahel in establishing a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework for its operations. It is also important to note that resolution 2391 (2017) calls for international contributions. The EU has delivered on that and we call on our fellow United Nations Members to do the same.

Indeed, the importance of global-regional partnership in peacekeeping has been underlined by many speakers today. We continue to advocate for an increased role for regional organizations within United Nations-authorized interventions, facilitating rapid deployment, when appropriate; complementing United Nations operations or deploying in a bridging capacity, for instance, in order to restore a safe and secure environment conducive to the subsequent deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, as was the case in the Central African Republic with the EU military operation in the Central African Republic. We also remain committed to giving full support to Africa's efforts to manage its own security. The EU's support will continue to cover all phases of the conflict cycle, including African-led initiatives to engage in preventive diplomacy and mediation, the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the deployment of African-led peace support operations.

Together with the United Nations, we are deepening our cooperation on topics of mutual interest as part of our long-standing strategic partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management. The ongoing process for defining the follow-up to our priorities for the period from 2015 to 2018 in order to strengthen this strategic partnership on peacekeeping and crisis management is therefore very timely. Another area in which United Nations-EU cooperation has intensified and in which the EU's added value and complementary role are unmistakable is security sector reform. In the past few years, the EU has undertaken a greater role within the overall responsibility for coordinating security sector reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as of United Nations special political missions.

Going forward, we must become even better at drawing on our respective expertise and comparative advantages to mutually support each other in the field and to ensure progress, including on implementing the women and peace and security agenda in peacekeeping, as well as working with other partners to generate smart pledges. We should focus on areas where our cooperation is likely to make a real difference on the ground. It is equally important to be realistic about what we can achieve and to manage expectations.

The reform initiatives launched by Secretary-General Guterres on management, the peace and security pillar and the development system will be necessary enabling factors in the success of his efforts to ensure that peacekeeping operations have a greater impact. Even the most successful peace operations cannot be a substitute for political processes. We continue to stress the paramount importance of political solutions to conflicts in order to address their root causes and the drivers of conflict, including human rights violations, as well as the priority that should be given to prevention. Prevention and sustaining peace must be thought of as a continuous process of which peacekeeping missions are only one essential part. The Council, together with other stakeholders, should reconsider ways to build consensus around strategic objectives for peacekeeping missions, the design of mandates, the prioritization of tasks and how to best monitor achievement. An effective feedback loop is as crucial as the underpinning in-depth conflict analysis. Strategic reviews should support the adjustment of key operations through an assessment of the capabilities and conditions needed for successful mandate implementation. A comprehensive performance policy for peacekeeping operations should also ensure that necessary remedial actions are taken swiftly.

We would also like to underline the importance of reducing the overall environmental impact of United Nations peacekeeping operations. A lighter footprint would enable cost efficiencies, as well as improving safety and security both for troops and citizens of host countries and, ultimately, mandate delivery.

We continue to underscore that the protection of civilians must be at the core of peacekeeping mandates. We also want to emphasize the critical role that United Nations peacekeepers play in protecting children in armed conflict. The effective implementation of the protection of civilians as a whole-of-mission effort requires better planning support for missions, capturing lessons learned effectively and improving analysis, alongside strengthening accountability for the implementation of mandated tasks. Consistent with clear mandates, peacekeepers must protect civilians and be able to use force when civilians are threatened with physical violence, while operations must be equipped with the necessary tools in that regard.

Finally, the international community will continue to address many challenging issues on the peacekeeping agenda this year. The EU stands ready to continue to constructively engage in that work.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Danon (Israel): I would like to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening today's meeting.

The Security Council mandates peacekeeping missions to help countries navigate the difficult path toward peace. Yet peacekeepers today face unprecedented challenges, especially in Africa. Working in dangerous environments, they are often the targets of armed groups, and the threats that they face are increasingly complex. Our responses must therefore evolve to match the realities on the ground. We must ensure that peacekeepers are properly protected and supplied with the necessary knowledge and training, as well as technological equipment, so that they can fulfil their mandates completely. Israel commends the Secretary-General's initiative in requesting and publishing the report of Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz on improving the safety of United Nations peacekeepers, and we appreciate

the Secretariat's efforts to internalize the report's recommendations. It is now the responsibility of the Security Council and the States Members of the United Nations to support immediate action to address the report's serious conclusions.

Israel is actively engaged in lending knowledge, expert advice and medical training to peacekeeping operations as well as supplying them with technological support. We have recently been working with the Medical Services Division to establish life-saving first-aid training for all peacekeepers and to support its efforts to establish a mental-health strategy action plan. We are also expanding our partnership with the Department of Field Support in order to improve camp security in field missions. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with United Nations departments on those important matters.

We also believe that the United Nations must continue to enforce its zero-tolerance policy and enhance its efforts to combat sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment both in local communities and within peacekeeping operations, sometimes known as "blue on blue". Too often, peacekeepers face threats of violence and assault from within as well as from external sources, which violates their most basic human rights, creates more victims, sabotages the ability of missions to fulfil their mandates and damages the legitimacy of the United Nations. Israel is committed to the protection of peacekeepers. We fully support peacekeeping efforts and will continue providing peacekeeping operations with the tools for success.

If we want peacekeeping operations to achieve the objectives that the Security Council sets for them, we must provide them with proper mandates and ensure that they are fully implemented. Israel has first-hand experience with this topic in relation to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a peacekeeping force stationed just beyond Israel's northern border. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council authorized UNIFIL to "take all necessary action ... to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities", with the goal of establishing "an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL". In resolution 2373 (2017), adopted last summer, the Council requested that the Secretary-General look at ways to increase UNIFIL's visible presence, including through patrols and inspections. It also requested ways to provide prompt and detailed reports on restrictions to UNIFIL's freedom of movement and on specific areas to which UNIFIL does not have access, and on the reasons behind those restrictions.

But the reality on the ground shows that UNIFIL's mandate has not been fully implemented. We continue to see an alarming situation that suggests that UNIFIL may be unable to fulfil all the provisions of its mandate. Hizbullah, the Iranian proxy and internationally designated terrorist organization, has taken more than two thirds of Shia towns and villages in UNIFIL's area of operations in southern Lebanon, using Lebanese civilians as human shields to protect its arsenal of more than 100,000 missiles and rockets. As we have informed the Security Council, armed Hizbullah fighters are visiting the Blue Line with leaders of other Iran-backed militia groups, in flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. They use those visits to call publicly for violence and for Israel's destruction. In accordance with its mandate, UNIFIL should be able to fully monitor and explore these unlawful activities and report on the true gravity of the situation in its area of operations, including the areas that it cannot access.

This Iranian-supported terror and the strengthening of Hizbullah in Lebanon represent just one example of Iran's dangerous aggression in our region. It is unfortunate, but we must all recognize that Iran's destructive behaviour has only gotten worse in the years since the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Iran is empowered by that agreement. Billions of dollars have flooded into the Iranian economy, only to fund a dangerous missile programme and the work of violent extremists in Lebanon, Yemen, Syria and Gaza. As we speak, the United States is conducting an important effort to fix the terrible flaws in what we have always said is a bad agreement. We are now at a critical juncture. This is the last chance to correct past mistakes and recognize that we must all embark on a new path to rein in Iran's reckless behaviour. I have a simple message for the permanent members of the Security Council today. They must not miss this opportunity. In 45 days, the clock will run out and the rules of the game will change. They have a choice to make, which is either to choose to work with the Americans and support their genuine efforts to make the Middle East a safer place, or to choose Iran and enable a dangerous regime. I urge them to make the right choice before it is too late for all of us.

Israel's commitment to peacekeeping operations is unwavering. We reiterate our support for the United

Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), as its forces continue returning to their positions in the Area of Separation. We appreciate UNDOF's important contributions to regional stability and look forward to continuing our support for its mission, as well as for all of the important protectors of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): The Holy See thanks the presidency of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening today's debate on United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Holy See believes in the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and appreciates the significant contribution of United Nations peacekeeping operations to the prevention and resolution of many armed conflicts within and among States.

In these times of shifting and changing threats to international peace and security, it is timely to seek together ways to further improve United Nations peacekeeping operations. Indeed, today's briefers highlighted the diverse challenges across the peacekeeping realm, which now includes international terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime and climate-related emergencies. They pointed to the need for more robust, coherent and comprehensive collective action in the context of the evolving threats to international peace and security.

As the challenges and threats continue to evolve, the Holy See believes that the protection of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, religious and cultural sites and water supplies, should remain a constant and crucial dimension of peacekeeping. In some situations of armed conflict, in particular when the conflict has involved ethnic cleansing or other forms of mass displacement, it is important that peacekeepers help to create the necessary conditions for the safe and dignified return of refugees, other forced migrants and internally displaced persons to their homes and properties.

That clearly requires a holistic approach, involving other United Nations agencies and various other institutions and stakeholders. From the start of every mission, the peace and security instruments of the United Nations must therefore work in tandem with development, human rights and humanitarian actors. Human rights violations are drivers of conflict. Restoring respect for human rights will often contribute to addressing the root causes of conflicts and to sustaining peace.

Another significant element in our common search of ways to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations is to identify the best times to deploy and to end a peacekeeping mission. Making the right decision in those critical areas has become all the more challenging of late as calls for the continuous engagement of a peacekeeping operation, from the early signs of conflict to the post-recovery phase, increase. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding have become so interwoven that many now expect them to routinely overlap in United Nations operations. My delegation trusts that the United Nations will always listen to and consult with the Governments and populations directly affected on the ground.

The challenge of making the best decision at those two critical moments of a peacekeeping operation is made more acute by the fact that no two conflicts are the same. It is therefore necessary to refrain from taking a one-size-fits-all approach and to tailor a peacekeeping operation in accordance with its specific purpose and context, including the cultural and religious sensibilities of the peoples directly affected by the conflict. In that regard, my delegation believes that the active participation of host countries in the orientation and training of peacekeepers before they are sent into the field is an important component in order to ensure the success of the mission.

My delegation has noted of the serious efforts aimed at setting new policies to strengthen the rules that govern the conduct and discipline of personnel. For example, strengthening norms for the prevention of sexual abuse against women and children by peacekeeping personnel is a necessary collective action to improve the credibility and acceptance of United Nations peacekeeping missions in their respective areas of operations and beyond. In that regard, the roles and responsibilities of the troop-contributing countries and the United Nations offices directly responsible for the oversight of peacekeeping operations should not be underestimated.

In the same vein, in the light of the worsening security situation prevailing in many field missions, the safety and security of United Nations personnel remain among the highest priorities. The United Nations should ensure that peacekeepers receive specific training for

the mission and that they are adequately equipped to protect themselves from aggressors. The perpetrators of attacks against United Nations peacekeepers must be brought to justice in conformity with the provisions of international law.

In closing, the Holy See pays special tribute to those peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

Ms. Plepytė (Lithuania): Allow me to start by commending the Netherlands, as President of the Security Council for the month of March, for convening this timely open debate.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

As a troop-contributing country, Lithuania has a great interest in making United Nations peacekeeping more efficient and capable of addressing the needs of the twenty-first century. Since October last year, Lithuania has significantly increased its United Nations peacekeeping contingent. Currently, 39 Lithuanians, both men and women in uniform, are deployed to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, serving in high-risk security environments. The safety and security of personnel deployed to overseas missions are of the highest priority for us. In that regard, we fully support all efforts to implement the plan of action and to take concrete measures to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers and other mission personnel, as proposed by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz in his recent report.

In environments where peacekeepers are directly targeted, where widespread violence is ongoing or where thousands of civilians need protection from unthinkable acts of violence, peacekeeping operations must remain fit for purpose. To confront the unique challenges of this century, peacekeepers require the tools and capabilities of the twenty-first century. In addition, missions require well-trained and skilled troops. Due to the increasing focus on the protection of civilians, training on humanitarian issues, human rights and gender sensitivity are essential for peacekeepers to be able to carry out their tasks properly.

Predeployment assessment is critical to ensuring that peacekeeping contingents meet United Nations standards and, even more important, respect the values and principles of United Nations peacekeeping. All allegations of misconduct must be examined thoroughly and those responsible for such conduct must be brought to account. In cases of shortcomings or misconduct, repatriation should be accepted as the only solution. A zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual misconduct, wherever and whenever it occurs, must be strictly implemented.

However, making United Nations peacekeeping missions more efficient and fit for purpose is not limited to the better training of troops or a better chain of command or to ensuring adequate logistical support. The participation of women at all levels greatly increases the operational effectiveness of peacekeeping missions and should therefore be strengthened. We also agree with those who call for a clear mandate and exit strategy from the very beginning of the engagement. It is the responsibility of the Security Council to set sound, realistic and achievable mandates for peacekeeping missions. However, that should not justify inaction. Regular, robust and independent reviews are necessary in order to evaluate the progress and to adapt the objectives.

Moreover, continuous horizon-scanning and early warning provide us with the opportunity to use other tools at the disposal of the United Nations. More investment in preventive diplomacy, early action and mediation, through full use of the United Nations standing mediation capacity, remain vital. Greater commitment and engagement must be devoted to supporting political processes and to preserving the continuum of peace.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the need to seek a more holistic United Nations response to peace operations. We need better complementarity of peacekeeping, conflict-prevention and peacebuilding work to be carried out in close cooperation and coordination among all the actors involved. However, even more fundamentally, it is time to focus all our efforts on implementation of the recommendations related to peacekeeping. We can no longer afford to live from one report to the next, while failing to fully implement the recommendations and ideas generated. The continuous efforts of the Secretariat, including the Strategic Force Generation and Capability Planning Cell, as well as the long-term commitment of Member States to implementing such

recommendations, are of fundamental importance to improving peacekeeping operations. Lithuania remains committed to doing its part.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I would like to congratulate the Netherlands on taking this important initiative and to thank the presidency for convening this very timely and relevant open debate, and in particular for its having been presided this morning by His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, as well as with the statement delivered by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

Last year, we witnessed an unprecedented number of peacekeeping fatalities. I would like take this opportunity to pay tribute to every man and woman for their sacrifice in the service of peace. It is imperative that we minimize the risk of deliberate attacks on United Nations missions or personnel, including through better early warning, intelligence and detection capabilities, and improved situational awareness and risk mitigation mechanisms. In line with the conclusions of the report recently issued by Lieutenant General Santos Cruz, as well as this year's deliberations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, we need to revisit the ways and means of ensuring the safety and security of our peacekeepers, making sure that the missions are sufficiently resourced and that personnel have all the training and equipment necessary to fulfil their mandates. In this regard, we welcome the report entitled *Improving security of United Nations Peacekeepers* of December 2017, and urge the Secretariat to implement its recommendations, in close cooperation with the troop-contributing countries (TCCs), the police-contributing countries (PCCs) and the Security Council.

Slovakia has been an active troop- and police-contributing country since its admission to the United Nations 25 years ago, having deployed to a total of 19 United Nations missions, contributing overall more than 7,300 men and women. Slovakia has also participated in military and civilian missions of the European Union, which also operates under Security Council mandates and, together with the United Nations in many conflict situations, helps to maintain peace and security. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our continued strong commitment to and active involvement in United Nations peacekeeping endeavours in the future.

Currently, the highest number of our military and police personnel is deployed in United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. I would also like to reiterate our Government's full support for the ongoing political process aimed at the reunification of Cyprus. In addition, we are proud to also serve in the Golan Heights and in Haiti.

As a TCC/PCC, Slovakia has subscribed to many important initiatives as a practical matter, but mostly as a matter of principle, such as the Kigali Principles, Vancouver Principles and the more recent voluntary compact to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. I would like to highlight a few aspects that we believe to be especially relevant in the context of today's open debate.

First, the issues associated with the supply side of peacekeeping operations remain at the cenre of our concerns. As a matter of priority, we must continue to address the difficulties in getting enough troops, the right equipment and adequate logistical support.

Secondly, efforts to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations should be read in conjunction with the other reform strands, as well as with the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda. The peace and security pillar reform must lead to more substantive delivery, and the management reform to better service delivery, with much less fragmentation. One of the overarching goals of the reform and restructuring of the United Nations peace and security pillar should be to prioritize prevention and sustaining peace.

Thirdly, a number of missions struggle to operate amidst broken or challenging peace processes and in asymmetric threat environments. In that respect, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary- General to review the limitations of traditional peacekeeping operations, including his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which he introduced this morning.

Fourthly, as has been said many times before, peacekeeping is a unique tool, but the pursuit of political solutions is key and cannot be replaced by anything, including by peacekeeping. The mandates of peacekeeping operations must evolve consistently with the context and needs on the ground. Reviews

of peacekeeping mandates must take into account the existence of exit strategies that seek to help lay the foundations for long-term and sustainable peace.

Member States increasingly view the issue of security sector reform (SSR), embedded in resolution 2151 (2014), as an important priority for peacekeeping, including for the timely conclusion of peacekeeping missions. Building more inclusive security and justice institutions also lies at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16. I wish to take this opportunity to highlight the fact that South Africa and Slovakia, as co-chairs of the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, will convene a high-level round table on security sector reform and sustaining peace on 23 April, in the sidelines of the upcoming General Assembly high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, to take place on 24 and 25 April.

In conclusion, peacekeeping remains one of the most critical areas of United Nations activities and where the Organization is most visible. Disappointment over its action or non-action may therefore be equally visible. My delegation looks forward to continuing to work closely with other Member States as we determine how best to strengthen this essential instrument for global peace and stability. In the light of the increasing scale and ever more sophisticated nature of conflicts, the urgency to act is more salient than ever.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Vaultier Mathias (Portugal) (*spoke in French*): Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, and would like to make a few additional remarks. To save time, I shall limit myself to delivering an abridged version of my statement, the full text of which will be distributed in the Chamber.

Allow me first to congratulate the Dutch presidency on having convened this open debate.

Peacekeeping operations are a concrete example of our collective efforts and one of the most important instruments in the implementation of Security Council mandates. Today's challenges call for a quick response from the United Nations. It is therefore imperative to strengthen and modernize peace operations by adapting them to current challenges. Portugal supports the United Nations system-wide reform process initiated by the Secretary-General, and in particular its emphasis on conflict prevention, the primacy of politics and the use of diplomacy as the optimal tools for achieving lasting peace.

In this context, peacekeeping operations must go beyond the peacekeeping/peace enforcement binomial and include early warning actions in order to prevent the emergence and aggravation of conflicts. We therefore advocate a comprehensive approach and, at the same time, close cooperation with local, regional and international partners, such as those developed with the African Union and the European Union. Similarly, gender balance is essential in the military, police and civilian components of peacekeeping operations, not only for a more equitable representation, but also to improve mission capacities to serve all sectors of the population.

Conscious of its responsibility for international security, my country has always maintained a high level of participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We are currently engaged in seven theatres of operations. I would like to highlight our participation in two of them: the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which is one of the most dangerous peace operations in Africa; and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, where we have deployed our largest contingent, consisting of 160 military personnel and 1 police officer. This translates into an operational, unrestricted and unrestrained rapid reaction force in cases that require a high level of mobility and rapid response, particularly in addressing situations of unprotected civilians or in deterring possible attacks.

This significant commitment on the part of my country is also an answer to the call of a very close European ally, France, on the heels of the terrible attacks in Paris.

Lastly, it will be essential to ensure a greater level of operationality and effectiveness among contingents. We also attach particular importance to training our Blue Helmets to maintain strict respect for codes of conduct under human rights law and international humanitarian law. And we stand ready to provide training for contingents from other troop-contributing countries with which we have joint military assistance programmes and cooperation

agreements, as is the case within the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Locsin (Philippines): The Philippines aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and thanks the Netherlands for convening this high-level open debate. We are gathered to show our collective commitment to sustaining peace as a goal and as a process to reinvigorate the Organization's mandate for peace as a core principle across the United Nations system, with the aim of restoring to the United Nations the lustre it had at its creation as the world's pre-eminent keeper and maker of peace.

During 50 years of peacekeeping operations, the Philippines has never faltered in its commitment to answering calls from the United Nations for peace and investment in peace, even as they have evolved in a changing world. We therefore signed the Voluntary Compact against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which concerns issues that have put to shame what should be held up and honoured — the United Nations peacekeeping mission. We renewed our pledge at the second Chiefs of Defence Conference to provide more military officers as observers and staff and to deploy more women peacekeepers, based on our conviction, grounded in experience, that the gender that binds the wounds of war, comforts the widows of war and shelters the children of conflict has the strongest motivation and the wisest approaches to preventing its outbreak and restoring peace that is broken.

Together with ASEAN, we reaffirm peacekeeping as a key element of ASEAN's political and security cooperation, as highlighted in the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations (2016-2020). Currently, 4,500 police, military advisers and troops from ASEAN countries are in 12 United Nations peacekeeping missions. The Philippines has scaled down its contributions because of local exigencies, but in the wake of victories at home, we are determined to bring our numbers up again and keep them growing in peacekeeping missions abroad. I would now like to present the Philippines' recommendations for our collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We repeat our support for calls to invest more in local political solutions to conflicts, which United Nations peacekeeping must reinforce and not supplant. People in conflict situations must feel that they own the peace that we merely help to bring about and keep. It is they who must configure the peace and the approaches to it, and no one else.

In complex and high-risk environments, success in peacekeeping operations must be measured by the mandate to protect civilians as the core criterion of success, with child protection and combating sexual abuse as key elements. Predeployment training efforts should be tailored to respond to particular, country-specific challenges with regard to protecting civilians, with clear definitions of the responsibilities, opportunities and constraints that peacekeepers will face in the field.

We join Indonesia in making ensuring the safety of peacekeepers an equally high priority, principally by enhancing the capacity of contributing countries and drawing as much hardware from developing countries as lessons from their generally satisfactory experience in the field. We do not recall ever having abandoned or abused those who sought our protection. Surely we have something to say on that score.

Concerning the responsibility to improve peacekeeping operations, we support the call for sustained triangular consultations and cooperation among the Security Council, the Secretariat and contributing countries. Without them, it is impossible to have a shared understanding of appropriate policy and of operational responses and their implications for the mandate and conduct of an operation.

With regard to strengthening the whole-of-mission approach, we repeat our support for relevant United Nations resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture, which underscore the importance of prioritizing intervention, addressing the root causes of conflict and devising long-term peacebuilding strategies, with adequate and sustainable financial resources that translate into concrete measures at the country level, but absolutely without any political coloration. If the politics of peacekeeping is not national, it is foreign interference. That used to be called peacekeeping by janissaries.

In order to revive a sense of shared responsibility for the success of peacekeeping, we support intergovernmental platforms that enable peer-learning

on building resilience and encouraging constructive dialogue on the challenges of sustaining peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of El Salvador.

Ms. Rivera Sánchez (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the presidency of the Netherlands for convening this open debate, and we take this opportunity to welcome the participation of Prime Minister Mark Rutte. We also appreciate the concept note (S/2018/184, annex) prepared for today's debate and commend the Secretary-General and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their valuable briefings this morning.

In the view of my delegation, peacekeeping operations continue to be one of the most effective mechanisms established by the international community to provide collective assistance to countries transitioning from conflict situations to peace. Everything that has to do with improving their efficiency and effectiveness therefore translates into an opportunity to contribute to achieving better outcomes for those processes.

Historically, El Salvador has been committed to peacekeeping operations and believes that they play a fundamental role in bringing about peace in the world. We therefore support all political processes aimed at establishing inclusive and legitimate Governments, providing security and promoting processes to build and sustain peace. My country is currently contributing to eight different missions with troops and police totalling 204 men and women, including a specialized air unit of 60 personnel awaiting deployment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

My delegation takes note of the report of Lieutenant General dos Santos Cruz, which has become an important tool for jointly addressing issues of concern and the shared challenges we face, and which can contribute to identifying a long-term strategy for achieving better outcomes in peacekeeping operations. El Salvador deems it important to highlight some aspects that are essential to ensuring the success of peacekeeping operations. One of them is the importance of holding effective triangular consultations in which the Security Council, contributing countries and the Secretariat can conduct objective assessments that will enable them to improve their operationality and functionality and to renew and revitalize missions' functioning. The perspectives of troop- and police-contributing countries must be kept in mind, particularly during the policy- and decision-making processes, including deployment, transition phases and the renewal of mandates, as well as when other relevant changes are occurring. They must have clear and achievable mandates that respond to the challenges on the ground. The desired outcomes can be achieved only through continued cooperation.

In order to be truly effective, peacekeeping operations must be able to depend from the very beginning on political support, adequate human, financial, logistical resources, and clearly defined and viable mandates, as well as personnel who are highly trained for the purpose of fulfilling their mission on the ground.

My delegation would like to acknowledge the vital role that women and young people play in the prevention and settlement of conflicts, and we emphasize the need to encourage their full participation in peacekeeping and advocating for peace, while underscoring the importance of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and resolution 1325 (2000).

El Salvador is deeply concerned about the precariousness of the political and security environment in areas where United Nations peacekeeping missions are deployed. The patterns of violence in conflict areas in which peacekeeping operations are deployed are at their worst level since 1994. In that regard, my delegation believes that to achieve the goal of lasting peace, operations must always be accompanied by a parallel and inclusive process that is well planned, carefully designed and backed by the consent and commitment of the parties concerned.

We must ensure strict adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, especially the principles of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of States and of non-intervention in internal affairs, which are fundamental elements of our joint efforts to promote international peace and security. Respect for those basic peacekeeping principles is essential to the success of operations on the ground.

We believe that it is vital to ensure the highest possible levels of ethical conduct of personnel involved in peacekeeping operations and reiterate our full commitment to the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations on sexual exploitation and abuse. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to the prompt investigation and eventual determination of responsibility for all misconduct, in accordance with

due process and the memorandums of understanding agreed to by the United Nations.

In conclusion, my delegation condemns all attacks and acts of violence against United Nations personnel as they carry out their functions and reiterates its concern for the safety and security of mission personnel in the field. To that end, we call for action to be taken to bring those responsible to justice and take this opportunity to pay tribute to the United Nations staff who have lost their lives while doing their commendable work, and to express our condolences to their families.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): Nepal would like to commend and express its appreciation to the Council's Dutch presidency for convening this important open debate, which is giving peacekeeping the priority and momentum it deserves. I thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and the other briefers for offering their perspectives.

I align myself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I will read an abridged version of my statement in the interests of time.

With its steadfast commitment to global peace, Nepal has been a dependable and enduring partner in United Nations peacekeeping operations for the past 60 years, during which more than 130,000 of its peacekeepers have served with distinction and 73 have laid down their precious lives in the line of duty. They have frequently been deployed at the shortest notice and in the most difficult theatres, where they have shown the greatest flexibility, never accompanied by caveats. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all past and present Nepali Blue Helmets, and all others, for their supreme service in the effort to make our world a safer place.

Nepal is currently the sixth largest troop- and police-contributing country in the world, serving in 14 of 15 missions. We combine the experience of United Nations peacekeeping around the world with that of a successful nationally driven post-conflict peace process at home. From that perspective, my delegation would like to highlight a few points that should be built into the framework of our collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Peacekeeping operations should be designed and deployed solely to complement and support an inclusive domestic political process, thereby ensuring their own impartiality and credibility and supporting the domestic capacity-building of the countries affected by conflict. The design of mandates must be based on thorough and broad analyses of conflicts and their root causes. All partners must be constructively engaged in the process of formulating mandates. It should be compulsory for penholders to consult with the prospective troop- and police-contributing countries on mandates before they are finalized, and mandates should be clear, credible, achievable and adequately resourced. Each should define the role and responsibility of all the key stakeholders and actors — the Security Council, the troop- and police-contributing countries, the Secretariat and others.

Mandates should be clearly communicated to peacekeepers on the ground and the tasks expected of them must be clearly linked to those mandates. Mission leaderships must set clear expectations for peacekeepers and be more accountable for the whole-of-mission performance. At no time should the fact that a contingent comes with no national caveats make it prone to unreasonable demands, deployments, rotations or scapegoating. Performance should be the primary basis for rotating contingents from different troop- and police-contributing countries, especially in transitional times. Mandates and peacekeepers' capacities should be consistently aligned and adjusted based on the evolving realities on the ground, with mobile training support teams provided as necessary.

The United Nations should work closely with relevant regional organizations without undermining the host country's sovereignty or its prerogative of initiating a nationally led peace process. Peacekeepers must win the trust and confidence of the civilians they protect, including by helping local communities improve their living conditions and ensuring harmonious relations among themselves.

Last but not least, peacekeepers should always be able to operate at the highest possible level of morale, with adequate measures taken to ensure their safety, security and dignity as they risk their lives to uphold the principles of the United Nations. They must have the confidence of knowing that they are never alone. Bringing the perpetrators of crimes against United Nations peacekeepers to justice is critical in that regard.

Peace and security, development and human rights, the three pillars of the United Nations, are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Thanks to the United Nations, the world has come a long way on those fronts, but with a paradox. Poverty, hunger and exclusion, the breeders of most conflicts, no longer appear invincible, but those working to end them are in dire need of more resources. And conflicts, where the largest part of our resources go, appear to be perpetuating themselves or breeding new ones, destroying development gains in most cases. Why has that happened? It is largely because the efforts to combat them have not been even-handed.

In conclusion, only our collective political will and action to address philosophical, policy and strategic questions relating to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding will ensure success on the peace and security front. That success will continue to elude us until inclusive development is fully embraced as the ultimate prevention tool, until politically negotiated peaceful solutions are found to settle every conflict and until conflicts anywhere are taken seriously long before they pose threats everywhere.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti.

Mr. Doualeh (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti would like to express its gratitude to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for organizing this important open debate of the Security Council on the theme of collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations. We thank the delegation of the State of Kuwait, your predecessor in the presidency, Sir, for its many successful initiatives during its tenure. We would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for the concept note (S/2018/184, annex) prepared for today's meeting, which helps to frame the issues and sharpen our focus on the key achievements that have been made as well as the serious deficiencies that must be remedied. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Ms. Fatimata Touré, Director of the Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action, for their valuable briefings and contributions.

(*spoke in French*)

While peacekeeping operations were born of improvisation, they have continued to develop and adapt to the numerous challenges posed by realities on the ground. And while assessments of their performance are sometimes severely criticized and lead to frustration, their usefulness as an essential mechanism for managing and resolving conflicts has never been questioned — indeed, the reverse is true. That is how we understand the essence of the reform proposed by Secretary-General António Guterres that is the framework for this open debate. We support the various measures proposed this morning by the Secretary-General to galvanize the collective action of Member States.

We should continually review our approach to peacekeeping operations and their methods by considering some key criteria. Of those, we emphasize that we must have clear, realistic and implementable mandates that are developed by taking into account the specific the context and realities on the ground. The political consensus that must prevail among all the national, regional and international stakeholders involved, especially the members of the Security Council, should be founded on the provision of adequate resources tailored to their mandates, including mobile and air capabilities such as helicopters, and, needless to say, adequate and well-trained military staff. A lack of those prerequisites is frequently a reason for failure in peacekeeping operations.

With regard to peacekeeping operations, Africa has unfortunately been a giant laboratory rat in recent years, making our continent an invaluable contributor to the ongoing collective reflection on decisive action. Africa's more active involvement where the Council's authority is concerned will be all the more timely, as Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, remarked during his statement at the initiation session for the newest members of the African Union's Peace and Security Council, held in Djibouti on 27 and 28 March, since this is a time when African leaders have shown renewed commitment to taking up the task of implementing the peace and security agenda for Africa.

(*spoke in English*)

The Security Council has an integral role to play in defining and helping us fill the current and future capability gaps in our missions, including through training and capacity-building assistance. The mission concepts for operations should be continually reassessed and their force composition and operational plans adjusted. Troop- and police-contributing countries

must remain flexible and adaptable with regard to the capabilities they provide and the time periods for which they provide them. Deploying forces that meet operational performance and conduct standards are critical elements in filling capability gaps.

(*spoke in French*)

We must share our risks and responsibilities together and shoulder our burdens together. Let us invest in peace together and let us mobilize to make our peacekeeping operations more effective, together.

Ms. Sukkar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the members of the delegation of the Netherlands for holding this important meeting. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres and all who briefed the Council and shared valuable information with it.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is one of the pioneer States in spreading peace and security in the region and the world. We participate in peacekeeping troops and in sharing our experience in international peace and security. Jordan plays an important role in dialogue and mediation for peace. We engage positively in peacekeeping tasks based on the principled positions of our foreign policy and the principles of moderation and respect for international conventions and treaties.

For decades, the Kingdom has taken part in peacekeeping operations all over the world under the umbrella of the United Nations. We have provided more than 100,000 participants in Croatia, Darfur, South Sudan, the Congo, Mali, Haiti, the Central African Republic and others. In that regard, we underscore that peacekeeping operations should never be an alternative to engagement in political processes that would ensure sustaining peace, peacebuilding and finding solutions to the root causes of conflicts and wars. We stress the need to work for conflict prevention and to provide the appropriate means and conditions for sustaining peace.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan values the efforts of the Secretary-General in the reform and restructuring of the peacebuilding sector in order to make missions more effective. That is the responsibility not only of troop- and police-contributing countries, but also of all relevant stakeholders, beginning from the design of a realistic and achievable mandate, all the way to providing adequate human and financial resources and equipment, as well as the required political will. Host countries, regional and local organizations, mission commanders also share responsibility. We emphasize the triangular consultation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop-contributing countries, as well as the importance of multilateral engagement and partnerships in facing challenges and achieving world peace.

The resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly on sustaining peace, in addition to the plan of action based on the Cruz report, are a good starting point to identify the challenges faced by peacekeeping operations and develop a realistic long-term strategy to tackle these challenges.

Excellent training is one of the main pillars of the success of peacekeeping troops and for improving their performance. In that regard, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, represented by the Jordanian armed forces and the Directorate of General Security, pays particular attention to training. We believe that providing quality training is an effective and principal requirement. Hence, in 1996 we established a training institute for peacekeeping operations where we train members of the Jordanian armed forces who will be participating in peacekeeping operations. Since 2003, we have been providing training courses for foreign participants. Our training institute is accredited by NATO and a member of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres. We have trained more than 66,000 troops from Jordan and other countries. We added another centre for peacekeeping training in 2013, which is supervised by the Directorate of General Security. We continue to support the Secretary-General's efforts with regards to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan supports the efforts of the Secretariat aimed at increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. We currently have 30 women participating in the police component of the peacekeeping missions in Darfur, South Sudan and Abyei. Of the 12 female officers trained in the institute, we have also deployed three female officers from the Jordanian armed forces. They are now staff officers in the Congo. Our goal is to increase the percentage of women to 15 per cent by the end of 2018. That reaffirms the importance that Jordan attaches to the participation of women and to enhancing

their role in peacekeeping operations. Women play an active and important role in peacekeeping.

In conclusion, the role of the United Nations should move from peacekeeping phase to post-conflict work. We call for the continued collective support of the international community as the world around us changes so that we can build active partnerships at all levels and address the root causes of conflicts and disputes in order to prevent them. Jordan supports all efforts towards enhancing peacekeeping and strengthening the links between peace, security, development and human rights. Those are the main pillars of the United Nations for achieving international peace and security and providing a better life for all.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I join others in thanking you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on an issue of vital importance for the United Nations. Our appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive overview of the current situation and to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of the non-governmental organization Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action for their informative briefings.

The first issue that I would like to address today is the increasingly life-threatening environments in which some of our current peacekeeping missions are currently deployed. The intensification and sophistication of the asymmetric threats posed by terrorist and extremist groups is a serious challenge to United Nations peacekeeping, both in terms of force protection and the implementation of its mandates. We condemn in the strongest terms all attacks on peacekeepers, who unfortunately have suffered the highest number of fatalities we have seen in more than two decades during the past year. Turkey supports the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ensure the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping missions, not least in terms of improved training for peacekeepers.

Peacekeeping operations, as the flagship activity of the United Nations, continue to be one of the most effective tools created by the international community to address conflict and post-conflict environments. We believe that an integrated, coherent and well-coordinated political and strategic framework is necessary for their effectiveness. Through that framework, the United Nations system can develop clear, realistic, credible and achievable mandates matched with appropriate resources and provide sound political directives to the troops and police on the ground.

We are confident that the ongoing reform process of the United Nations peace and security architecture will have positive ramifications for the way that the United Nations addresses the challenges it faces in that regard. At the same time, the mandates given to United Nations peacekeeping operations should be commensurate with the resources allocated to them. We must also have in place predictable, professional and flexible logistical support systems, as well as the tools and means for increasing the performance of our troops and police.

There is no doubt that multidimensional peacekeeping operations require a variety of expertise, which cannot be met solely by military personnel. Therefore, it is vital to enhance the policing aspect of our missions, in order to ensure that they perform mandated tasks more effectively. Moreover, we should all adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual violence incidents and make sure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

As a dedicated troop- and police-contributing country, not only to United Nations operations but also to other missions conducted by regional organizations, such as NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Turkey is fully engaged in global peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. We will also continue to make contributions to the discussions within the United Nations on those matters with a view to developing a viable road map to peace in conflict situations, based on the primacy of conflict prevention, including through effective mediation, as well as addressing the root causes of conflicts, with the appropriate understanding of local circumstances.

Given the magnitude and complexity of current global challenges, we believe that the United Nations should further enhance its cooperation with regional organizations and establish more effective arrangements in support of its peace operations. We welcome the steps taken so far, as evidenced by today's interaction, in furthering cooperation with the African Union. Further regionalizing peacekeeping would not only increase efficiency by tailoring our efforts to local needs, but also ensure their sustainability even after international attention fades away.

Before I conclude, I would like to pay tribute to the men and women serving in peacekeeping missions

and putting their lives at risk every day to provide peace, security and stability in various parts of the world. They fulfil a sacred duty on behalf of the entire international community. We pay tribute in particular to those who have sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of a more peaceful world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Ms. Bavdaž Kuret (Slovenia): I would like to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for bringing this issue to the forefront of discussion in the Security Council.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer the European Union and the statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect.

I wish to bring to the Council's attention the following national views.

Peacekeeping operations have become the most visible activity of the United Nations over the past few decades. The global security environment is ever changing and challenges to it are emerging and evolving. Such challenges demand new and innovative approaches and that must be reflected in appropriate adjustments within international operations and missions. They are becoming increasingly dynamic, their mandates are growing in diversity and their individual tasks are intertwined.

The following principles and values are the basis of Slovenia's participation in international operations and missions: strengthening international security, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the protection of particularly vulnerable groups.

In 2017, Slovenia marked the twentieth anniversary of the deployment of its first contingent of Slovenian military and police officers to international operations and missions and the tenth anniversary of the deployment of civilian functional experts. In those years, more than 13,500 uniformed and civilian personnel served in United Nations and other peace support operations and, throughout that period, Slovenia has continued to upgrade and enhance its participation in various ways, such as by specializing in specific tasks and acting in a more gender-balanced manner. In our view, collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations should focus in particular on the following issues.

First, efforts to improve the security of peacekeepers, as well as civilians, are our collective responsibility. We fully agree with the recommendations contained in the report of Lieutenant General Santos Cruz and we support the Secretary-General's initiative for immediate action to address weaknesses and systemic gaps. Close cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, such as countries contributing troops and police, the Security Council, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, key financial contributors and providers of training and equipment, regional partners and host countries, is crucial in that regard.

Secondly, we strongly believe that every peacekeeping mission must be supported by properly trained, well-equipped and motivated troops. Countries that contribute troops and police themselves must invest more in both training and equipment. The analytical and intelligence skills required to identify threats as they emerge should also be improved.

Thirdly, we would also stress the importance of integrating the gender perspective into all phases of peacekeeping. There is a need to increase the number of women in international operations and missions and deployed personnel must receive the best possible training on women and peace and security issues.

Fourthly, paying due attention to the code of conduct is another important aspect. The fundamental role of international operations and missions is to contribute to peace and security and protect the most vulnerable on the ground. We would therefore like to reiterate our support for two important initiatives: first, the prevention of, and response to, sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations, including the Circle of Leadership, and secondly, the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.

Lastly, Slovenia will continue to participate in activities led by the United Nations and other relevant international organizations in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations to establish and maintain international peace and security. By committing to solidarity and peace, Slovenia would like to continue to endeavour to be a reliable member of the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Rosselli Frieri (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured to take the floor again in the Chamber and in particular under your presidency, Ambassador Van Oosterom.

I thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening today's debate. I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their briefings earlier today.

It has already been done by others, but nonetheless Uruguay would like to pay tribute to the men and women of all countries who have served in peacekeeping operations. Their commitment and dedication have saved and continue to save countless lives. Regrettably, many Blue Helmets have lost their lives in service to the United Nations. We owe them an enormous debt of gratitude.

Uruguay is one of the 20 largest contributors of troops and police and fully agrees with the concept of collective action to improve peacekeeping operations. The Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat play a key role in such operations. The Security Council must understand that political solutions will always guide the design and deployment of operations and that political momentum must be maintained throughout the various cycles of conflict. Therefore, the political strategies that underpin peacekeeping operations must have the support of a united Security Council, without which the operations' success could be seriously affected.

The Security Council also has the responsibility to ensure the full functionality of a peacekeeping operation once it has been deployed, which includes, among other things, requesting and obtaining from host States full respect for and compliance with the terms agreed to in the status of forces agreements. Those agreements are safeguards that protect the personnel that a country has voluntarily seconded to a peacekeeping operation. The Security Council has not always been able to demand and ensure that host countries comply with the terms of status of forces agreements.

With regard to troop- and police-contributing countries, they bear the direct responsibility for ensuring that they send peacekeepers who are properly equipped and trained and prepared to implement all the tasks under a mandate and in strict compliance with the standards of conduct of the United Nations, in particular those that pertain to the policy of zero tolerance against exploitation and sexual abuse.

On that issue, my delegation would like to underscore the point that national restrictions — the so-called caveats — be they declared or, even worse, not declared; the lack of effective chains of command and control; the refusal to obey orders; the failure to respond to attacks against civilians; and the lack of equipment cannot be tolerated, given that they undermine the shared responsibility for effective mandate delivery. Moreover, the increase in the frequency of attacks deliberately targeting United Nations staff and facilities underscores the need for peacekeepers to be given clear rules for their effective, proportionate and robust defence against such attacks.

That topic has been addressed in detail by the Santos Cruz report, which ends with a series of practical recommendations. We highlight the importance of implementing those recommendations, while recalling the need to implement the recommendations of previous reports, such as the 2015 High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations report (see S/2015/446) or the Cammaert report, which have not necessarily received the attention or response that they deserve.

With regard to the Secretariat, its role is decisive in terms of providing advice and making recommendations on addressing the reconfiguration needs of operations. We acknowledge the important efforts that the Secretariat is carrying out as part of the process of the strategic reviews of the main peacekeeping operations. We believe that those reviews are a vital exercise within our efforts to adapt peacekeeping operations to current needs.

We also commend the efforts we have seen in the different forums where the theme of peacekeeping is being addressed. Among them, we point to the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which recently wrapped up its session, which resulted in various points of agreement on sensible and topical aspects of peacekeeping, such as the security and performance of peacekeepers, the concept of the protection of civilians, and triangular cooperation. The Fifth Committee will soon turn its attention to the peacekeeping budget. It is essential that Member States reaffirm their commitment to the peacekeeping operations reform process and provide operations with sufficient resources to allow them to achieve their mandates.

Uruguay also underscores the useful ministerial meetings on peacekeeping, which have proven their worth as platforms for achieving concrete outcomes

on issues, such as the generation of forces, through new agreements.

In conclusion, my delegation believes it is crucial that we frame those efforts within the broader United Nations reform efforts being pursued by the Secretary-General, that is, management reform and the restructuring of the peace and security pillar. Both reform proposals by the Secretary-General, could, depending on the decisions of Member States, have a major positive impact on the future of peacekeeping operations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium associates itself with the statement of the European Union, as well as with those of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security and the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect, of which it is a member.

The figures are worrying. Peacekeepers are increasingly being killed on mission. I would like to begin by paying tribute to those who have contributed to peace by sacrificing their lives, often far from home. We owe them all a great deal. The facts are well known — stalled political processes, differences among the parties, a tendency to rely on the mission to replace the role of the State, contradictory political messages addressed by the authorities to the people. The Blue Helmets are becoming targets for who they are and what they represent, and that is unacceptable.

However, peacekeeping has also been a positive experience: West Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone are examples of successful missions. The United Nations Mission in Liberia will close its doors in two days. Those situations illustrate the importance of having, at the outset of the mission, a clear view of the elements that will enable the peacekeeping operation to withdraw from the country once its mandate has been fulfilled.

Peacekeeping is constantly evolving, and we thank the Netherlands for giving further impetus to this debate in the run-up to the high-level event in September and a possible adoption of a resolution by the Council.

General Cruz's report made recommendations aimed not only at improving the security of the men and women who make up the contingents, but also at making the operations more efficient. The Secretary-General wasted no time in presenting a plan of action to implement those recommendations. We welcome those measures and would like to support their implementation. The Cruz report is unambiguous: to mitigate risks it is necessary to improve the performance of the deployed troops and make the use of intelligence more systematic and effective.

The protection of civilians has become one of the priority tasks of peacekeeping operations. However, that task will remain an illusion if the troops involved do not have the necessary skills required for the mission, if they are not properly trained and prepared, and if they do not have the necessary equipment. Not all troop-contributing countries have the same operational experience. To match the level of performance with the needs of the mission, the training and preparation of contingents have become essential. Small gaps can be corrected within the mission, but larger gaps need to be identified and resolved before any contingents are deployed.

Belgium welcomes the establishment of an agile coordination mechanism to connect troop-contributing countries that have expressed a need with those that have the necessary experience. Mapping and keeping track of trained personnel should also be improved, and respect for the chain of command, from the moment contingents are deployed in missions, is an essential precondition if we want a mission to be effective, credible and respected on the ground.

Belgium has decided to contribute to strengthening the capacity-building of contingents from French-speaking countries. We support the training of staff officers in Entebbe, and we are also financing the translation of manuals into French. In addition, thanks to Belgian support, the first United Nations training in French on the protection of civilians will be held in June.

We also want to respond to the specific needs identified in the Cruz report, and we will consider, in close collaboration with the training services, additional support to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, both in the area of combat medicine and by providing a mobile training team. In an asymmetric environment, such as that of Mali, a more effective use of intelligence is an essential requirement for ensuring security and mission performance and, ultimately, protecting civilians. Belgium, as a troop-contributing country, provides a significant portion of the deployed personnel in the

Mission's intelligence structures and is preparing to do even more in 2018.

Improving operations also means using the strategic review instrument more effectively. They are an opportunity to put the political process and the protection of civilians back at the heart of mandates. Strategic reviews are there to give us the keys to redirect missions in a manner more in line with mandates or, on the contrary, to modify mandates that have become unrealistic or impracticable on the ground.

Strategic reviews should be an opportunity for frank conversations about what is realistic and achievable, and about the mission horizon, without of course diminishing the deep ambition of the mission. In some cases, it would be appropriate to sequence the objectives more. In all cases, including the difficult budgetary negotiations that we will have in the coming years, Belgium is in favour of maintaining substantial capacities in the areas of child protection and gender policy. The fight against impunity must also be an integral part of the longer-term mission strategy. In terms of good practices, the experience of mixed patrols involving mediation or human rights experts, police and military should be applied in more missions.

The various exchanges that will take place this year will aim to clarify roles and responsibilities in the reform agenda that is on the table. I can assure you, Sir, of Belgium's readiness to contribute actively and concretely to this discussion throughout this year but also even more closely with our Security Council partners during the 2019-2020 term, for which we are a candidate.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We thank the Netherlands presidency for organizing today's open debate on an issue of such importance for many of our delegations. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and the other briefers for sharing their insights.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the various Groups of Friends to which we belong.

Peacekeeping is the flagship contribution of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security. Bangladesh feels proud to have been associated with it over the last three decades. Peacekeeping is no longer a uniform, monolithic enterprise. There have been major shifts in peacekeeping mandates, theatres and operational modalities over the years. All concerned stakeholders, including the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat, have shown varying degrees of adaptability in response to those shifts. Increased partnership with regional and subregional organizations and the growing participation of women in peacekeeping have become regular features.

Notions of review and reform are now embedded in peacekeeping. However, there is no specific institutional mechanism within the Secretariat to steer the reform initiatives in a coherent and sustainable manner. In the context of the Secretary-General's broad vision for reform, this issue in particular deserves to be addressed.

The focus on collective action at today's open debate is indeed pertinent. We all agree on the need for reform, but we diverge on ways to make that happen. In today's complex and precarious peacekeeping environment, there are certain critical issues where we need to strive for a common understanding. The fatalities among peacekeepers were at a record high last year. We must get our acts together to reverse that trend. We can start with renewed commitment to a set of issues that would be mutually reinforced through differentiated responsibilities assumed by the concerned stakeholders. Our delegation would support any constructive suggestion to that effect, including the possibility of a General Assembly resolution on the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The political primacy of peacekeeping operations is a sine qua non. Where the political process stagnates or falters, civilians become more vulnerable to indiscriminate attacks and peacekeepers get further exposed to asymmetric threats. It is crucial that an objective assessment of the political process guide the design and review of peacekeeping mandates. A long-term prognosis about sustaining peace on the ground should determine sequenced and prioritized mandates tailored to the specific context.

The questions of the mindset and performance of peacekeepers have recently gained a lot of attention. In our view, the military and policy components of peacekeeping missions generally demonstrate a readiness to adapt their mindsets towards facilitating effective mandate delivery. It is expected that the Security Council and other stakeholders will also show

sufficient responsiveness to the messages coming from the field and therefore adjust their own mindsets and usual frames of reference.

Our peacekeepers remain open to receiving objective assessment and appraisal of their performance. We recognize the rather belated yet positive initiative to develop a coordinated performance-evaluation policy framework, which we stress should be informed by regular, triangular consultations. However, performance cannot be seen in isolation from the fundamental questions of predictable needs-based resources and critical enablers specific to each peacekeeping mission.

Member States in a position to provide resources and specialized equipment and training must come forward with an unequivocal commitment to helping to enhance the situational awareness, access, agility and performance of peacekeepers. The decisive factor of mission leadership and the enabling role of host States need not be overemphasized. There needs to be improvement on a range of issues from rapid deployment to unimpeded access, from physical security to human intelligence gathering, from expectation management to reducing environmental footprints.

The current trends do not augur well. We can certainly do better by mobilizing our shared commitments and collective actions. Let today's open debate help chart a course in that direction.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the initiative of the Netherlands to hold today's debate. Today's meeting is a timely opportunity to assess prospects for the reform of peacekeeping operations.

It is nothing short of symbolic that this important session is held just two days before the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) — one of the milestone success stories of the United Nations peacekeeping endeavour. Having contributed to UNMIL from the very day of its deployment, Ukraine takes pride in its role in making its success story possible. Our Blue Helmets in Liberia pioneered such innovative forms of peacekeeping as inter-mission cooperation and robust peacekeeping, which are both highly relevant to today's topic.

It is crystal clear from this debate that peacekeeping operations are one of the most reliable and commonly used instruments. Yet a lot remains to be done in both the political and the technical dimensions in order to bring United Nations peacekeeping up to speed and meet the complexity of contemporary challenges. The challenges are indeed contemporary, but they are not new — at least not all of them. Wars, armed conflicts and aggression are still proliferating and often spiralling out of control. Therefore, the Organization must be more proactive and preventive in its actions than ever before. In this context, I would like to express our full support for the Secretary-General's reform effort, which should result in strengthening strategic advice to the Security Council, including more active recourse to Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Comprehensive reform of United Nations peacekeeping is important for the Organization's continued success and relevance. In recent years, some progress has been achieved in making peacekeeping operations better prepared to execute mandated tasks, but we are not there yet. I see the following areas as ones that continue to need to be properly addressed.

First, we need to secure the use of appropriate modern technologies in peacekeeping operations and reinforce intelligence capacities of operations. Secondly, the police capabilities of the Organization need to be strengthened. Thirdly, efforts to eradicate sexual violence in United Nations peacekeeping must also remain among the priorities of peacekeeping reform. Fourthly, we see significant room for increasing women's participation in peacekeeping activity, as well as for improving the human rights components in peacekeeping operations. Fifthly, it is critical to ensure that peacekeeping operations do not have a harmful environmental footprint while executing their mandates.

For peacekeeping operations to get stronger and more effective, it is essential to provide them with the right capabilities and manpower and to make them ready and willing to implement mandates including on the protection of civilians. Due attention must also be paid to securing proper funding and providing sufficient resources, such as helicopters, as needed. That is imperative for ensuring the security and mobility of peacekeeping personnel.

Missions should be provided with clear mandates set out in accordance with the core tenets of United Nations peacekeeping and with the focus on supporting a political solution to a conflict. In that regard, the impartiality of a mission and its personnel should be one of the guiding principles. The tasks of peacekeeping operations should not be limited only to the security sphere; they also have to be capable of providing a proper environment and supporting electoral processes, in accordance with democratic standards, which often become a turning point in post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding. In cases of aggression, restoring legitimate Government authority over occupied territories, establishing control over the State border and securing the withdrawal of the occupying forces are prerequisites of successful peacekeeping operations.

For more than four years the situation in and around my own country has remained as an example of the unutilized potential of United Nations peacekeeping. Our request to deploy a peacekeeping operation in the Donbass region of Ukraine has still not been properly considered and no action has been taken. We were encouraged that from his first days in office Secretary-General Guterres declared a clear position on the primacy of conflict prevention, mediation and other diplomatic peacebuilding tools. In that respect, his visit to Ukraine last July was a sound manifestation of his commitment to bringing peace to Europe.

There now hangs over the continent a very real threat of another full-fledged war due to ongoing aggression by a permanent member of the Council against my country, as well as its aggressive actions in other parts of the world, including in the territory of other permanent members of the Council. That is why what is urgently needed now are concrete actions, both on the part of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. We stand ready to engage constructively at all levels.

Ukraine has been a strong and reliable partner of the Organization in peacekeeping activities and will remain a steadfast supporter and contributor. As announced recently by the President of Ukraine, we are ready to extend the geography of our engagement in United Nations peacekeeping operations. For instance, we are ready to participate in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to all peacekeepers who lost their lives while safeguarding international peace during the past 70 years.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on a successful presidency of the Security Council, which culminates in today's debate at a time marked by key processes relating to the maintenance of peace, in particular the review of the peace and security pillar. I would also like to warmly congratulate the Secretary-General for his briefing, which confirms his firm commitment to the maintenance of peace. Morocco also thanks the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for his briefing, which confirms the strategic nature of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. Finally, I would like to commend Ms. Touré, for her moving and passionate intervention, which enables us to better grasp the magnitude of the challenges that still must be overcome in Mali.

Morocco, which has been a troop-contributing country on an ongoing basis for 60 years, has first-hand experience of this issue. Peacekeeping has evolved, while the risks for United Nations personnel are becoming ever greater. It is high time for the Organization to take the necessary measures to adapt to this fact.

The need for recasting peacekeeping is nothing new. The report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations — known as the Brahimi report — in its day made recommendations along those lines, and they are as relevant as ever. The same is true of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines — also known as the Capstone Doctrine — as well as the report of the United Nations High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), the current process capped by the Cruz report, and the new vision of the Secretary-General, which he presented this morning to the Council. Hence, the importance of institutional memory.

One must also never lose sight of the fact that the goal of peacekeeping operations is that of resolving crises. The primacy of politics must never be sacrificed to other elements of the mandate. We hope that the current strategic reviews will allow us to strengthen this critical aspect of peacekeeping operations.

On the issue of partnerships, we had an opportunity to hear from Mr. Faki Mahamat this morning, who presented, in a comprehensive way, the challenges and opportunities inherent in the partnership. Morocco, which rejoined the continent-wide African Union organization in January 2017 and was recently elected a member of the Peace and Security Council, is committed to sharing its experience for the benefit of both organizations.

More than 10 years have elapsed since the financing of African Union operations mandated by the Security Council has been discussed without significant progress. We all agree when it comes to affirming the importance of partnerships that the time has now come for the United Nations to provide the necessary support to the African Union in order to provide that partnership with the resources needed to achieve the scale and effectiveness awaited.

We would also like to emphasize Morocco's belief that a greater number of women in peacekeeping missions is needed, if not mandatory. Morocco will continue to take the necessary measures to increase the percentage of women in its deployments in peacekeeping operations.

Today's debate raises many pertinent questions. We take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for the zero-tolerance policy aimed at ending sexual abuse and exploitation and the recent initiatives of the Secretary-General in that regard, which we fully support.

I shall restrict my remarks to the notion of collective responsibility and that of performance. To quote an expression dear to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierred Lacroix, "Peacekeeping is a family within the United Nations." We must support that approach and avoid, to the extent possible, shirking responsibility and finger-pointing. This notion of collective responsibility can be made tangible on the basis of the following elements.

First, mandates must be realistic and adapted to the situation on the ground. It is in that spirit that we emphasize the importance of triangular cooperation, as troop-contributing countries have gained experience and expertise that needs to be shared. We hope that the group that we set up last year with Pakistan, bringing together the major troop- and police-contributing countries, will play a positive part in strengthening triangular cooperation by providing a platform for exchanges, both with the Secretariat and the Security Council.

Secondly, the documents that define a mission's needs in terms of equipment are vitally important for mandate delivery. They must be regularly updated each time that the operational concepts or the mandates change. The equipment must be able to be looked after, and the troop-contributing countries have an obligation to provide material that meets United Nations standards.

Thirdly, training is the responsibility of troop-contributing countries, which undertake to provide only military and career police officers. We are also responsible for predeployment training, which we provide on the basis of Secretariat documents. Hence the importance of updating the documents made available to us, according to the realities in the theatres of deployment. On the basis of its experience, Morocco has for several decades now been engaged in providing military capacity-building and training to our many African partners. We stand ready to offer our first-rate facilities and expertise to all in the framework of a triangular partnership in order to expand the number of beneficiaries.

Fourthly, managing expectations, whether of the civilian population, the authorities or the Security Council, is essential. Let us take the example of the protection of civilians, which is one of the key mandated tasks, but also the most difficult to fulfil. It is difficult to expect that a contingent of 750 soldiers can guarantee the protection of a civilian population on a surface area as big as an entire country. It is vital that our soldiers are backed by clear rules of engagement and supported by appropriate equipment.

I would like to briefly address the second point. We often hear talk of troop performance, but we should rather focus on the performance of missions in a holistic manner. All the elements that I referred to earlier impact the performance — at Headquarters level, at the level of the mission's leadership and among deployed contingents. That was rightly pointed out in the latest report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the men and women deployed in extremely difficult conditions, and more particularly to the Blue Helmets who sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on a subject of great significance for global peace and security, particularly to the continent of Africa. I also wish to commend Secretary-General Guterres for his strong statement setting out his vision of the future of peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, let me commend Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for his briefing.

The United Republic of Tanzania is committed to continuing to support collective measures to attain global peace and stability. To demonstrate that commitment, we are proud that, among the current uniformed peacekeeping troops in 16 missions, Tanzania is one of the highest contributors of the 123 contributor countries, with military, police and corrections personnel deployed to a total of six United Nations peacekeeping missions, namely, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

The pursuit of shared peace, security and prosperity lies at the heart of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the noble and legitimate aspiration of all peoples and nations. It is our solemn duty to design appropriate mechanisms in order to fulfil those ambitions, which are shared by all humankind. In such circumstances, peacekeeping has, and must continue to be, a collective global undertaking. We must be a community of peacekeeping nations rather than a disparate aggregation of troop/police-contributors, personnel contributors, financial contributors or resource-contributing countries.

Contemporary peacekeeping operations have undergone a tactical shift from the traditional peacekeeping role to multidimensional operations, which require peacekeeping missions to be configured in a robust manner in order to implement and defend their mandates. In view of the new dynamics, there is an urgent need for the Security Council, Member State contributor countries and regional bodies to work closely together under the auspices of triangular cooperation mechanisms in order to achieve the envisaged political outcome and to strengthen strategic coherence. In that regard, based on triangular consultations among the key stakeholders, the Security Council should be guided by meaningful dialogue before the issuance or renewal of actionable mandates, which must clearly set out the operational priorities, implications and required capabilities.

The Security Council and the Secretariat, in collaboration with troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs and PCCs) and other actors, are indeed solely obliged to deliver more effectively on their responsibilities to improve peacekeeping operations. In that regard, the Security Council needs to ensure that a clear mandate is issued and that it is implemented by all actors. The Secretariat should ensure that the mandate is clearly interpreted and, accordingly, provide guidance on its implementation. In consultation with all actors, the Secretariat should review the statu of the implementation and should advise both the Security Council and the TCCs andPCCs on the way forward before the renewal of the mandate. In that regard, the TCCs and PCCs clearly need to be informed about the status of the operational performance evaluation of their respective contingents in order to ensure a timely response to the identified shortfalls.

While we commend the initiatives of the Secretary-General to improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers in implementation of the Cruz report, as a Member State we have some concerns and reservations, including with regard to the following. The TCCs and PCCs remain solely responsible for ensuring that the troops are well equipped and trained in accordance with the specific mission requirements. The TCCs and PCCs in the high-risk missions mentioned were not consulted during the process in order to submit their points of view to Lieutenant General Cruz. We think that most of the issues outlined in the report are purely basic military tactics and training, which are an integral part of most national combat training standards.

In that regard, we would like to underscore the need to respect the doctrines and training standards of the TCCs. Since mission-specific tactical training is not part of the United Nations training modules — but it should be the case — we encourage missions to put in place the appropriate mechanisms to regulate and to evaluate the contingent's readiness for the mission,

which should include induction or in-mission training for all troops.

As all those present may be aware, upon the issuance of any mandate the Secretariat needs to clearly interpret it and outline the specific actions and rules of engagement of the respective missions. In that regard, there is a need to ensure that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the commanders and the civilian as well as the military staff officers in all mission components have the correct mindset to defend and to implement the mandate.

The United Nations is currently in the process of downsizing the force levels of peacekeeping missions due to budgetary constraints. It is very unfortunate to note that the ongoing force reduction process is not informed by the situation on the ground. As a result, the lives of Blue Helmets are in jeopardy due to the fact that the reduced force levels are outstripped by the proxy forces and end up being overstretched and vulnerable to those proxy forces. In that regard, we wish to appeal to the United Nations, including the Security Council, to regularly consult with troop- and police-contributing countries in order to ensure that the mandates are configured and realigned to clearly address the actual situation on the ground with adequate force levels and capabilities commensurate with the proxy forces.

Missions should be adequately resourced and equipped with all critical enablers. In reference to the recent attacks, we strongly propose the need for all missions to have credible all-weather contingency support for and reinforcement of troops in both day and night operations.

In conclusion, albeit with even more weight than in the preceding discussions, we pay heartfelt tribute to the men and women who have had their lives altered as a result of their participation in, and commitment to, the cause of peace. We honour the memories of all those who paid the ultimate price in the hope of seeing a better tomorrow for those whom they worked hard to protect. Their deaths must not be in vein. We owe it to them to work hard and in a more united way in order to realize the fruits for which they sacrificed their lives.

I congratulate you, Mr. President, on the Netherlands presidency of the Security Council throughout this month.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on peacekeeping operations.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union earlier today. I would like to make the following comments in my national capacity.

Peacekeeping is at the heart of United Nations efforts to increase security and to sustain peace in many parts of the world. It plays a critical role in the face of multiplying threats and conflicts, both traditional and asymmetrical in nature. Yet the increased number of casualties among peacekeepers, with the 56 fatalities in 2017 being the highest number since 1994, is a sobering reminder that the United Nations and troop- and police-contributing countries need to transform the system in order to face the current realities.

As the Cruz report highlights, the shift has to be system-wide, encompassing leadership, accountability, operational behaviour, the use of force, training, intelligence and more. The safety of United Nations personnel and the mission is a necessary prerequisite for the political success of any peacekeeping mission, particularly in high-risk settings. Mobilizing our efforts to that end should be our utmost priority.

Along with the increased focus on the military component of missions, it is vital to focus on the political contexts and the mandates of peacekeeping operations. It is clear that peacekeeping missions alone cannot bring about lasting peace without political solutions and support on the ground. Peacekeeping missions should have the core objective of contributing to the creation of conditions for an inclusive political process aimed at national dialogue and reconciliation.

The mandates and capacities to implement those mandates should be clearly defined. Mandates should be realistic, context-tailored and flexible and, within them, tasks need to be prioritized, sequenced and adjusted over periods of time.

In that context, let me recall Georgia's experience with regard to peace operations. While Georgia never enjoyed a peacekeeping operation with a full-fledged mandate, from 1993 the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) played a crucial role in achieving security. However, in 2009, UNOMIG was discontinued due to the veto of a permanent member

of the Council, thereby creating a very dangerous precedent in the history of the United Nations.

The forceful termination of the UNOMIG mandate, preceded by the cessation of the mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, created a total vacuum of international presence in the occupied regions of Georgia and turned them into black holes for human rights and "one of the most inaccessible places on Earth", as observed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Russian occupation has turned Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions into territories in which there is no accountability for murder and torture, as demonstrated by the brutal death of an internally displaced Georgian civilian, Archil Tatunashvili, which took place on 22 February. His body, however, was released by occupying forces only a few days ago so that he could be given a proper burial. An investigation by forensic experts showed clear evidence of torture. That situation speaks to the urgent need for creating international security arrangements on the ground as provided and mandated by the 12 August 2008 European Union-mediated ceasefire agreement between the Russian Federation and Georgia. Progress, or even a meaningful discussion on that issue, remains elusive, while in the Council we face the reality that the primacy of politics does not allow for the creation of much-needed peacekeeping mandates in conflict-affected territories in which the host country is deprived of its ability to exercise jurisdiction.

The 2016 landmark twin resolutions on sustaining peace — resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262 — provide us with a foundation for our work, and the Secretary-General's reform agenda provides us with an opportunity to institute changes at the United Nations. We commend the Secretary-General on efforts already under way and the recommendations presented in his report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43). Streamlining the system, with structural reforms and delegating responsibilities through a holistic, cross-pillar approach affords the Organization an opportunity to improve its delivery of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Lastly, we call for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations to ensure sustainable peace, justice, respect for human rights and development. We believe that regular consultations and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, are indispensable to converging strategies to secure sustainable peace on the ground.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. González Parra (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I thank you, Sir, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening this open debate of the Security Council on the topic of collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Ms. María Ángela Holguín Cuéllar, stated during a debate on the reform of peace operations in September 2017, we in Colombia believe that the time has come to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations effectively respond to the pressing challenges that they face in a world of changing threats. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the concept of sustaining peace advocated for by the Secretary General. We understand the reference to "collective action" in the concept note (S/2018/184, annex) for this debate as a call for findings synergies in the implementation of that important concept. We believe that reconfiguring the peace and security pillar constitutes a crucial step in the transition from words to actions. As the concept note aptly points out, that concept is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders: host nations, regional organizations, States Members, including troop- and police-contributing countries, and, of course, the Secretariat and the Security Council.

My delegation agrees with the concept note's view concerning the need for those actors to conceive of their contributions in terms of precise and strategic goals and a concrete perception of the outcomes to be achieved on a case-by-case basis. Such collaborative work cannot be limited to situational challenges, but must constantly strive to satisfying the greatest of aspirations — achieving peace — including through strengthening national capacity and fostering the conditions that enable countries to confront their challenges independently, as well as to foster the development and well-being of their people. The

Secretary-General raised the issue with the greatest clarity when he stated earlier today,

> "Put simply, peace operations cannot succeed if they are deployed instead of a political solution rather than in support of one".

The groundwork has already been laid with important contributions, among which I would like to highlight the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture (see S/2015/490), which rightly calls for overcoming fragmentation in the implementation of mandates. Moreover, the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) reminds us that peacekeeping operations must maintain their focus on people. Those assessments, together with ideas on how to move forward, are judiciously reflected in the report (S/2018/43) of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, which has provided us with proposals to make the United Nations effective in one of its fundamental mandates set out in the Charter of the United Nations. We are also encouraged by the draft report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations for this year, as it calls for avoiding fragmentation and emphasizes an aspect that we consider crucial both for the effective deployment and successful completion of a mission. First of all, it allows us confront the long-standing absence of women in peacekeeping operations. Women represent only 4.7 per cent of military experts in the field and 3.2 per cent of troops. The level of representation of women within the United Nations police is also low — only 16.9 per cent of its members are female. Secondly, it is essential to provide added value to individual experiences on the ground in terms of what does and does not work and how to achieve better outcomes when we consider the specific conditions of every particular situation. For there is no magic formula that can be applied to every situation.

Colombia has not only participated as a police-contributing country in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti since 2006, in which we have lent support to areas such as technical advice in intelligence, the judicial police, anti-narcotics efforts and community policing, as well as training their own forces — an undertaking to which we will continue to contribute together with the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in this new phase — but we have also begun — thanks to the commitment of President Juan Manuel Santos Calderón — the process of contributing personnel to other places, including our presence today in the Central African Republic, Lebanon and Guinea Bissau. Our goal is to strengthen training and increase the number of Colombian police and military personnel in peacekeeping operations. My country believes that participation in that process is an unavoidable responsibility as a Member of the United Nations and as a nation committed to peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Zaayman (South Africa): I thank the delegation of the Netherlands for organizing this timely open debate on the collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

In the 70 years since the establishment of the United Nations, the need for the Organization to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war has never been greater. In that regard, South Africa reaffirms that United Nations peacekeeping remains a flagship activity at the disposal of the United Nations to contribute to the ideal of peace, security and stability. Since the inception of the Organization, United Nations peacekeeping has provided essential security and much-needed hope to many people around the world, and the necessary support to countries emerging from conflict.

Peacekeeping must be used to support political processes and solutions to any conflict situation. South Africa holds the view that we must undoubtedly aim to strengthen the tools at our disposal in addressing conflicts as they arise. We need to put emphasis on the preventative approach, including mediation, in addressing conflicts and their root causes so as to prevent them. Our efforts must also focus on preventing countries emerging from conflict from relapsing back therein. Conflict prevention must therefore begin with steps to prevent conflicts rather than to respond to them after violence has already occurred.

Consequently, South Africa believes that global peace and stability will remain elusive if we do not address the nexus between security and development; one cannot be achieved without the other. Sustainable peace can be achieved only by building a just world in a rules-based international order that is inclusive and

addresses the root causes of conflicts, such as poverty, injustice and discrimination.

As the organ entrusted with the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations, and in the context of new emerging threats aimed at our troops and United Nations personnel, the Security Council must ensure that operations are fully resourced, entrusted with the appropriate mandate to respond to the context-specific environment in which they are deployed and ensure that peacekeepers are adequately equipped to protect themselves and defend their mandates.

Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations highlights the role of regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. My delegation supports the implementation of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed between the Secretary-General and Chairperson of the African Union Commission, which emphasizes preventing and mediating conflict and sustaining peace; responding to conflict; addressing root causes; and the continuous review and enhancement of the partnership.

While the primary responsibility for international peace and security lies with the Security Council, it is often regional organizations, such as the African Union, that deploy early in order to stabilize crisis situations. South Africa wishes to reiterate that the use of United Nations assessed contributions will provide the most reliable, sustainable and predictable avenue of support for Security Council-mandated Africa Union peace operations.

South Africa supports recommendations for more realistic, tailored and flexible mandates, which will contribute towards more efficient and effective peacekeeping operations, and, ultimately, to more successful outcomes in conflict resolution. Mandates should be drafted in consultation with those who are responsible for their implementation — for example, the troop- and police-contributing countries. The view of troop- and police-contributing countries should be heard, as they have a unique perspective being on the ground and understanding the specific challenges their peacekeepers face in a particular environment.

As peacekeeping continues to evolve, the United Nations must also evolve. That is important in view of the increasing asymmetrical threats and acts of terrorism directed against peacekeeping missions and violence towards innocent civilians. My delegation notes the recommendations of the report on improving security of United Nations peacekeepers, known as the Santos-Cruz report, and further requests that the Secretary-General consults troop- and police-contributing countries before and during the implementation of those recommendations. As the report states, peacekeepers need adequate equipment, especially modern technologies. We therefore believe that modern technology can help minimize harm and the loss of life of our troops deployed in fragile and dangerous environments. The use of information, communication and technologies, including night-flying fighting capabilities, should be adopted in order to ensure that peacekeepers are ready to counter any attack by armed groups and able to fight in all conditions.

The protection of civilians must be at the heart of peacekeeping missions. In some cases, that may require the use of force, in accordance with the mission mandate and in compliance with the applicable legal framework. In that regard, the deployment of the Force Intervention Brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a credible example of what can be achieved to address potential threats to a peace mission.

South Africa strongly condemns sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers. When the very people charged with protecting civilians become the violators, the trust established between those communities and the United Nations missions is betrayed and the credibility of the United Nations is compromised. I wish to reconfirm that South Africa is fully committed to a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation in peacekeeping operations. We will continue to take strong, immediate and decisive action against those found guilty of such abuses.

In conclusion, South Africa would like to pay tribute to the men and women who continue to serve in United Nations peace missions, including those who paid the ultimate price in service of maintaining peace in the challenging and often dangerous environments. The number of peacekeepers who are lost to disease during deployment remains too high, and it is in our hands to adopt and implement policies to prevent that from happening again.

The year 2018 has been declared the year of Nelson Mandela in celebration of the centenary of his birth. Former President Mandela dedicated his life to the service of humankind and contributed immensely to

the promotion of a culture of peace throughout the world. It is my Government's hope that he will be remembered worldwide for his values and dedication to the service of humankind in the fields of conflict resolution, reconciliation and the promotion of peace, which is the ultimate goal of all peacekeeping missions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I join other speakers in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this timely open debate. We are grateful to Lieutenant General Dos Santos Cruz, author of the report on improving security of United Nations peacekeepers. We also particularly welcome the presence of the African Union Commission Chairperson, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, at today's debate.

Building on the outcome of the 2015 High-level Panel to review peace operations, the Santos-Cruz report contains important recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness, safety and security of current and future missions. Switzerland notes with satisfaction that the Secretariat has already started implementing key recommendations of the report. We also welcome the envisaged creation of a single plan of action to improve peacekeeping operations. I would like to focus today on three priority issues.

First, let me underline the strategic importance of securing sustainable and predictable funding for peace operations, including in settings where the United Nations is working in partnership with others. Further enhancing cooperation with regional and subregional organizations will contribute to designing more context-specific and tailor-made mandates, which is one of the key recommendations of the peace operations review and the Santos-Cruz report.

Secondly, Switzerland would like to emphasize the role of equipment in enhancing the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. The equipment of peacekeepers must be in line with the threat environment and allow troops to prevent attacks, identify perpetrators and eliminate threats accordingly. Access to up-to-date and quality medical care capabilities is crucial to limit the victims of attacks.

Thirdly, regarding the duty of care, some of our personnel in the field are active in highly volatile, hazardous or even intensely hostile areas. Member States and the Organization itself are therefore morally and legally bound to ensure that duty-of-care obligations are fulfilled. In order to mitigate the risks to all deployed personnel, those obligations — including certified predeployment training and other preparatory work — must be met by all parties involved.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the numerous Blue Helmets who have lost their lives or been injured recently. They are a tragic reminder that the issue of safety and security remains vital and begs our continued attention and action. While there is increasing pressure to save costs in United Nations peacekeeping, that must not come at the expense of the courageous men and women who risk their lives in fulfilling the mandates of the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a pleasure to have you, Mr. President, preside over this open debate and the Security Council for this month.

Cuba fully supports the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We take note of the Secretary-General's statement and the briefings delivered by the briefers, as well the proposals set forth to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

To improve the security of peacekeeping operations staff, the Secretariat should implement those measures that fall within its authority, in consultation with the Member States and with due consideration of the relevant organs. We recall the leading role of the General Assembly in developing concepts, policies and strategies for peacekeeping operations and its Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — the only United Nations forum mandated to consider the issue. Ideas and approaches to peacekeeping operations should be implemented only once agreed by Member States in the appropriate organ.

In a context of increased risks to peacekeeping operations due to the current environments in which they are deployed, Cuba reaffirms that the basic principles of such operations remain valid for guiding the deployment of the Blue Helmets. The establishment and deployment of peacekeeping operations must be carried out in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

especially respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs. It is more important than ever to respect those precepts, as well as the basic principles established for the conduct of peacekeeping operations, such as the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence.

Cuba deplores the loss of life of Blue Helmets and expresses its concern about the increase in the number of peacekeeping operations staff casualties over the past year. Nevertheless, we are not convinced that the Security Council's approval of operations involving the use of force beyond the basic principles I mentioned can contribute to improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and the security of their military, police or civilian personnel. The use of force by peacekeeping operations has political implications and can lead to unforeseen circumstances, including increased risk of threats and attacks against United Nations personnel. We note that peacekeeping operations, by composition and character, are not intended or equipped for counter-terrorism operations.

We reiterate that efforts to protect civilians should be designed to support, rather than replace, the efforts of national authorities. The protection of civilians cannot in any way become a pretext for disregarding the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Cuba believes that, in order to eliminate the impact of threats on the security of peacekeeping operations personnel and in order to improve their effectiveness, such operations must have viable and realistic mandates, concrete and clearly defined objectives and the necessary resources to carry them out.

We call on all parties involved to give greater impetus, increase the number and even improve the effectiveness of the triangular consultations among the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries. It is an important tool that can provide a better understanding of the situation on the ground and assist in the design, development and renewal of mandates, as well as staff security.

Although new technologies can increase knowledge of the environment and staff safety, legitimate concerns have been raised regarding the deployment and use of certain resources in peacekeeping operations, particularly those related to the management of collected information. The use of such information should be considered on a case-by-case basis and with the consent of the host State.

In conclusion, we reiterate that peacekeeping operations are not a substitute for addressing and resolving the root causes of conflicts, and that they should allow for the creation of a security framework that makes it possible to implement a long-term strategy for sustainable economic and social development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Maldives.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your successful presidency of the Security Council for the month of March, and to thank you for convening this important debate on collective action to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The United Nations was established with the noble objective to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding have become among the most effective instruments in the maintenance of international peace and security. Peacekeeping operations are about creating a safer tomorrow for those with little hope; it is about rebuilding communities and creating an environment for future generations to grow and unleash their creativity. For that to happen, there is a need to re-evaluate the level of coordination that exists between the various agencies of the United Nations, both here in New York and in the field, in designing such operations. The Maldives proposes that we should not lose sight of the fact that, while peacekeeping and peacemaking operations can succeed in keeping warring parties apart, an equally important priority must be to address the root causes of the conflict and to create the conditions so that the affected communities can enjoy the dividends of peace.

For that to happen, we must construct an analytical framework that enables the Council to consider the necessary changes to United Nations peacekeeping mission mandates. Such a framework can start by establishing, at the inception level, greater coordination and operational coherence between peacekeeping operations and the United Nations country team on the ground. The design stage of any peacekeeping operation should take full account of the unique historical, political and economic circumstances of the situation, using the most relevant analytical tools available. Such tools must be used to identify the underlying

set of issues and causes that led to the conflict in the first place.

Situations that have given rise to conflicts are often due to system-level failures that might have resulted from the decaying social fabric that held the communities together for several centuries, or it might be the gradual weakening of the State's capacity to govern and maintain order. Any peacekeeping or peacebuilding operation, in any intra-State conflict, should aim to build the capacity of the State, first to govern and then to foster a governing order that is rooted in the principles of democracy, good governance and inclusive development.

The Maldives also wishes to reiterate the need to integrate the relevant aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in designing peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. The 2030 Agenda makes it clear that there can be no peace without sustainable development and no sustainable development without peace. There is enough empirical evidence to suggest that poverty alleviation and inclusive economic and social development promote the causes of peace. Therefore, those factors should figure more prominently in the design and implementation of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. The Maldives hopes to see renewed emphasis on that point in the implementation of the reform package of the Secretary General. The United Nations should be able to act as one United Nations in helping a country to sustain peace and, when required, to keep the peace.

Efforts to improve peacekeeping operations should, as a matter of urgency, review the coordination mechanism between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations that have assumed greater responsibilities in peacekeeping operations. Regional organizations need the political support, financial resources and assets required to implement Council decisions in the maintenance of international peace and security. The collaboration between the Security Council and regional organizations should be enhanced and institutionalized with more predictable support.

The Maldives believes that the Security Council, in collaboration with other agencies of the United Nations system, can inspire and lead in bringing the necessary reforms to peacekeeping missions, in designing such operations and in implementing a set of strategies that will sustain peace. The reforms must take a holistic approach and must take into consideration the wishes to of every woman, man and child in conflict areas and give hope for a better future. The Maldives believes that the Security Council will not fail to provide the necessary leadership to create a safer world for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): It has been a long day, but I can assure the members of the Security Council that it has been a productive one.

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Mali, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on a successful presidency of the Security Council this month and on the outstanding manner in which you are guiding the Council's work.

I would like to highlight the contribution made by your beautiful country, the Netherlands, a friend of Mali, to the stabilization process under way in my country. I also take this opportunity to welcome the recent decision taken by the Government of Canada to deploy an air task force to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The topic of today's debate is of particular importance to my country, which, as the Council knows, is both a troop-contributing country and, above all, now host to one of the most significant United Nations missions, MINUSMA, both in terms of its personnel and budget and its complex challenges.

The Government of Mali is fully aware of the scope of the missions entrusted to the Blue Helmets — men and women deployed to maintain peace and security throughout the world, often in extreme conditions and at risk to their lives. In that regard, I would like to pay well-deserved tribute to all of the victims of the Malian crisis — civilians and military personnel, foreigners and Malians — who perished on the field of honour in our country.

United Nations peacekeeping operations remain an indispensable instrument for ensuring international peace and security. Earlier today we heard soulful pleas and strong demands and expectations from my compatriot Fatimata Touré. She conveyed the expectations the entire population of Mali has of the United Nations. We must believe that the nature of conflict has changed and that the complex situation on the ground calls for collective responsibility on our part to implement the bold and swift reforms

required to improve United Nations peace missions. That collective responsibility lies with the Security Council, the States Members of the United Nations, in particular troop-contributing countries, the Secretariat and regional organizations.

With regard to MINUSMA in particular, we all agree that it does not operate in a traditional peacekeeping environment. Asymmetrical attacks are carried out by terrorist groups and drug traffickers of all kinds who indiscriminately target civilians, the Malian defence and security forces and the foreign forces of MINUSMA, France and all partners on the ground, including those of the European Union. That is why the Government of Mali has asked that MINUSMA be given a robust mandate, not to combat terrorism — we know that is not in its remit — but, above all, to adopt a more offensive stance in the face of imminent and real threats, in order to protect itself and defenceless civilians, as stipulated in its mandate. In doing so MINUSMA would be more effective and credible in the eyes of our people. We hope that the ongoing strategic review of MINUSMA will recommend, inter alia, that the strong opinions of Malians be taken into account ahead of the Mission's mandate renewal scheduled for June.

Similarly, it is essential to strengthen the operational capacities of peacekeeping missions, in particular MINUSMA, so that they can fully and effectively implement their mandates. Troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat have a clear responsibility in that area.

The delegation of Mali welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to reform the peace and security pillar of the United Nations and to enhance the effectiveness and coherence of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, while paying particular attention to preventive measures and sustaining peace. I would also like to stress the relevance of the recommendations made by Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz in his report on improving the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers.

Finally, I would like to underscore the role of regional organizations, in particular the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Group of Five States for the Sahel, in the stabilization and development processes of Member States in crisis. It is therefore essential that the United Nations strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations in order to ensure the success of peacekeeping operations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Dutch presidency of the Security Council for its outstanding efforts during the month of March and for convening today's debate, which contributes to coordinating efforts towards improving peacekeeping operations.

Over the past few years, we have seen how peacekeeping operations have been saddled with unrealistic burdens and mandated with tasks that exceed their ability in a way that ignores the political reality and the situation on the ground. The deployment of some missions has become a mere symbol of the inability of the United Nations to achieve final settlement of decades-long conflicts. Thus far, efforts to improve peacekeeping operations have focused on addressing operational and technical shortcomings, namely, the readiness and adequacy of contingents and equipment and the conduct and discipline of peacekeepers. In addition, ensuring the physical protection of civilians has been the only parameter according to which the effectiveness of a mission is gauged. As important as those aspects are, they are insufficient to achieve the desired objective. In that regard, we would like to underscore a number of points relating to the topic of today's debate.

First, partnerships among the main actors in peacekeeping operations must be improved, including the host country, troop- and police-contributing countries, the Security Council, the Secretariat and regional organizations. That would ensure joint ownership of the missions at all levels, starting with the strategic level, then formulating executable realistic mandates and reaching practical implementation. In that regard, we would like to underscore the importance of regional organizations, in particular the African Union, according to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Joint ownership and responsibility requires improvement in existing traditional coordination mechanisms. It is not enough to hold official meetings. Coordination is required at the decision-making level in order to design mandates. In that context, we underscore the importance of the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has become instrumental in

enhancing the Council's ability to design mandates that address the root causes of conflict. We look forward to an enhanced role for the Peacebuilding Commission in the upcoming phase.

Secondly, we must avoid deploying United Nations missions without taking into consideration the general context of conflicts. We highlight the presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/27) with regard to the contribution of peacekeeping operations to sustaining peace. That statement establishes seven indicators to be taken into account when designing or renewing mandates, including supporting national ownership of political settlement processes; setting clearly defined objectives towards sustaining peace; conducting an integrated analysis within the missions of opportunities and challenges to building national capabilities; ensuring coherence between political and operational tasks of a mission; establishing clear responsibilities and integration of roles among the missions and other United Nations agencies and programmes to support national institutions; and having mission exit strategy that enables national institutions to sustain peace in the long run.

Those indicators contained in the aforementioned presidential statement contribute to assessing the success of peacekeeping operations and their actual impact. They enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and reduce their costs, as well as decreasing deployment times. To that end, tangible results in the ongoing strategic review processes for a number of missions must be achieved through the adoption by the Security Council of those recommendations. Otherwise, those reviews will be merely theoretical exercises with no practical implications.

Thirdly, when assessing the performance and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, we must take into account the specificity of each conflict and the operational, tactical and political conditions of each mission. Performance assessments should not be limited to operational aspects; they should also include an assessment of the role of the mission as a whole in settling conflicts.

With regard to the Organization's ability to mobilize potentials and forces, we have seen commendable efforts undertaken recently to increase the number of troop-contributing countries through the Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS). There must be a qualitative shift in the work of PCRS so that it becomes more flexible and capable of selecting the best-trained and equipped troops. The selection process must be based on the requirements of each mission. This is why we need a smart and customized PCRS.

Fourthly and lastly, the safety and security issue of peacekeepers cannot be addressed from an operational and training perspective alone. There is an organic connection between the safety of peacekeepers and the overall political efforts carried out by the United Nations in addressing the conflict in question. Accordingly, the recommendations contained in the Cruz report and the proposed action plan constitute commendable efforts. However, those recommendations only address one of the intertwined aspects of this issue.

We stress that the prevailing mindset of the forces is derived primarily from the mandate adopted by the Security Council, which brings us back to the core issues: partnership and joint ownership in designing mandates, and the equitable sharing of responsibilities among the Secretariat, the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries. We do not consider the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of peacekeeping operations to be restrictive with regard to the performance of forces. On the contrary, they are the main guarantors of the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Egypt's commitment to contributing effectively to peacekeeping operations. I express our appreciation to those who have lost their lives while defending the principles, purposes and mandates of the United Nations. We must do our utmost to continue to improve peacekeeping operations in order to honour their sacrifice.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cyprus.

Mr. Kornelíou (Cyprus): At the outset let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on having organized this timely debate and commend you, Sir, on your presidency. We thank the Secretary-General for his presentation and express our full support to his efforts to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping. Our thanks also go to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of the Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action for their contributions.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

For my country, a discussion on this specific topic in the Security Council is first and foremost a reminder of our obligation to reiterate our utmost appreciation and to pay tribute to the United Nations, the Security Council and the countries that have contributed troops and resources to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). As a country that has relied on United Nations peacekeeping, we are all the more conscious of our responsibility to do our share in the collective effort to give the Blue Helmets the means to effectively deliver the mandates entrusted to them by the Security Council.

Even if the term "peacekeeping" is not explicitly provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, it should not escape our attention that its foundations are enshrined in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter. That is vital, given the fact that we sometimes run the risk of losing sight of the actual purpose that peacekeeping should serve.

Peacekeeping operations must have sound, realistic and robust mandates. When a peacekeeping operation has been deployed after the Security Council has established the existence of a threat to international peace and security, that peacekeeping operation ought to have the support necessary to be able to respond to that challenge for as long as the abnormality continuous. That is the very essence of peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping operations should continuously undergo modernization and renewal in order to adjust to contemporary needs and challenges. While acknowledging the wider need to undertake reviews of the peacekeeping operations, we have to take into consideration the specificities faced by each operation. It is of paramount importance that the strategic reviews are rigorous, evidence based and conducted in close consultation with the host country, as was recently the case with UNFICYP.

In conclusion, let me highlight that peacekeeping plays an indispensable and catalytic role in ensuring the necessary stability and security on the ground, which, in turn, enables and facilitates the political process. Peacekeeping operations are in place to contribute to the creation of conditions that are conducive to political processes, which could lead to viable solutions that would address the root causes of the conflict by restoring law and order, based on international law.

That said, peacekeeping operations should not be used as leverage in any peace process, since they are meant to serve as the means through which the United Nations and the international community persevere in their efforts aimed at preventing the outbreak of conflicts and ensuring stability, even more so in the absence of a political process. We have a shared responsibility to remain committed and to ensure that, in the name of peace, our collective efforts will be put on the right track.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening this very important open debate. Our thanks also go to the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their comprehensive briefings.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Peacekeeping operations have been playing a crucial role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. It is a shared understanding that United Nations peacekeeping operations need to be reformed to better respond to unprecedented complex challenges. Allow me to highlight a few points on what needs to be done collectively to make peacekeeping operations more effective and efficient.

First and foremost, it is crucial to clearly define the mandate of each mission in conformity with the realities on the ground and to provide missions with adequate political support and necessary resources so that they can fulfil their mandates.

Secondly, capacity-building and predeployment training must be enhanced. This is of the utmost importance, especially at a time when the safety and security of United Nations personnel are increasingly at risk. The recommendations of the Cruz report need to be taken into serious consideration and implemented adequately to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers. At the same time, we stress the need to

prevent and eradicate the sexual exploitation, abuse and any other misconduct by United Nations personnel on duty. We strongly support the efforts made by the Secretary-General in this regard.

Thirdly, the participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations is to be encouraged. Viet Nam's first-ever woman peacekeeper, who began her mission in South Sudan earlier this year, is to be joined by many more women as part of the upcoming opening of a level-2 hospital.

Fourthly, triangular partnership and consultations among the Security Council, the Secretariat and the troop- and police-contributing countries should be promoted in an inclusive and transparent manner. More attention should be given to cooperation with regional and subregional organizations to make use of their practical experience on the ground. We hope that the Secretary-General's initiative on the restructuring of the peace and security pillar will help strengthen coordination among different United Nations entities, both at Headquarters and in field missions, and bring about positive changes on the ground.

It is our principled position that respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of non-intervention into the internal affairs of sovereign States, the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence or in defence of a mandate, should serve as the foundation for all United Nations peacekeeping operations. We share the view that greater focus should be placed on preventive diplomacy and mediation in the search for long-term political solutions to conflicts.

Since 2014, Viet Nam has been actively participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations. At present, we are in the final stage of the preparation for the deployment of a level-2 hospital in South Sudan in line with United Nations standards and requirements.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Viet Nam will spare no effort to make further contributions to this noble endeavour.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Ms. Vilde (Latvia): I would like to thank the Dutch presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's important debate. I also thank the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Director of the non-governmental organization Groupe de recherche, d'étude et de formation femme-action, for their useful briefings today.

Latvia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

Peacekeeping is one of the key instruments available to the United Nations in discharging its responsibility to maintain international peace and security, yet achieving lasting peace in many places has been a tremendous challenge. Peacekeeping environments have become more complex and riskier than ever, and, regrettably, attacks on peacekeeping missions and peacekeepers have risen in recent years. Latvia pays tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations for their courage and dedication, and we honour those who have lost their lives in serving the cause of peace. Much more needs to be done to bring the perpetrators of such attacks to justice.

In the past few years since the major peace and security reviews, much has been done to improve our approach to United Nations peacekeeping. Latvia fully supports efforts to make United Nations peacekeeping more responsive to the challenges of the twenty-first century. Yet our work and commitment to making United Nations peacekeeping operations more adaptable and relevant to the current complex challenges must continue. It is especially important to bridge the gaps in United Nations capabilities when it comes to rapid deployment of peacekeeping missions. In this regard, Latvia particularly welcomes the work on improving cooperation with relevant regional actors, such as the African Union and the European Union.

The ultimate goal of United Nations peacekeeping reform must be peacekeeping missions with realistic mandates that meet the practical necessities of the host nation or area of deployment. Better planning, equipment and training are essential to effective mandate delivery, protection of civilians and security of United Nations personnel.

Improving the security of United Nations peacekeepers, as detailed in the report of former United Nations Force Commander Lieutenant General Santos Cruz, is our shared responsibility. We all need to invest in changes to improve leadership, operational behaviour, the use of force, defensive posture, the selection of peacekeepers, predeployment training and equipment. Often the root of the problem lies in the

lack of situational awareness and localized intelligence analysis especially when missions are exposed to asymmetric threats.

We fully support United Nations efforts to better integrate modern technologies and intelligence capabilities into United Nations peacekeeping. Latvia has contributed intelligence specialists to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) since early 2016. Moreover, in recognition of the Mission's critical need for intelligence- and information-analysis capacities, Latvia increased its contribution to MINUSMA last year.

We also recognize the inherent value of the involvement of women in peacekeeping. Latvia fully supports the ongoing work to align United Nations peacekeeping reform with the provisions of the women and peace and security concept. We also commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations system.

The pursuit of political settlements should be our overall aim. However, to achieve lasting peace, United Nations peacekeeping must be part of a larger approach within United Nations conflict-prevention efforts. We must strive to use all United Nations instruments to ensure that all people can live in a more peaceful, prosperous and secure world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Yaakob (Malaysia): I would like at the outset to thank the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening today's timely and important debate. I also wish to join the other speakers who took the floor before me in thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat and Ms. Fatimata Touré for their briefings.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I wish to add a few points in my national capacity.

Malaysia continues to believe that the United Nations plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of international peace and security through, inter alia, peacekeeping operations. That is why Malaysia believes in the reform of the United Nations peacekeeping operations to make them fit for purpose and cost-efficient.

Malaysia first participated in a peacekeeping operation in 1960, and since then we have contributed thousands of peacekeepers to United Nations peacekeeping operations. At the moment, Malaysia is participating in 6 out of 16 United Nations peacekeeping operations, contributing nearly 1,000 peacekeepers. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the sacrifices of all peacekeepers — to the devoted men and women serving with unwavering dedication and great distinction in our common endeavour to keep peace. Some have paid the ultimate price, with their lives.

Malaysia believes that the reform of United Nations peacekeeping operations should focus on the continuous strengthening and enhancing of the capabilities of its peacekeeping missions so that they may fulfil their mandates. This is to ensure that they remain relevant and, more importantly, effective. In addition, efforts also must be geared towards enhancing the overall performance of peacekeepers through the proper training.

We acknowledge that military, police and civilian personnel deployed in volatile and perilous locations must be equipped with the right aptitudes, strong survival skills and unquestionable competencies. This is due to more comprehensive peacekeeping mandates that encompass the necessity to protect civilians, address sexual violence and overcome human rights challenges. We believe that providing a common training module prior to their deployment is vital to the safety and security of our peacekeepers. In that context, I would like to mention that in 1966 Malaysia established a peacekeeping training centre that has trained thousands of peacekeepers, not only from Malaysia but also from other countries.

Each peacekeeping mission is unique and distinct. Therefore, we need to take into account various challenges on the ground, such as the mission's components, the environment, suitable equipment and coordination among various stakeholders, in our collective efforts to enhance the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. In that regard, Malaysia believes that it is important to strengthen cooperation not just between the United Nations, Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries, but also with regional and subregional organizations, as well as the active participation of the host country.

In the context of the peacekeeping missions in Africa, Malaysia welcomes the African Union's resolve

in taking up a more prominent leadership role in increasing and enhancing peacekeeping capabilities among its members. We believe that the African Union would have a better understanding of the continent's own security challenges.

To conclude, Malaysia reaffirms its support for enhancing and strengthening the United Nations peacekeeping missions. We reiterate our full cooperation with all stakeholders because we sincerely believe that only by working together can we ensure that all peacekeeping missions will fulfil their mandates, fit for purpose and in a cost-efficient manner.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): I thank the Secretary-General; Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; and Director Fatimata Touré for their insightful briefings this morning and their determination to strengthen peacekeeping. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for convening this critical debate.

We have convened in this Chamber countless times, and after each meeting the feeling that remains is always the same — will this be the meeting that changes our course regarding peacekeeping operations? Given the interest across the United Nations membership that we have seen in today's debate — and I was impressed to see that I am the seventieth speaker — I believe that this particular meeting and debate will make a difference.

Peacekeeping has been to date the most effective United Nations contribution to peace and security. There is, however, room for improvement. There have been numerous reviews and reports, including on ways to improve peacekeeping operations. I think that today we can all agree that, quite honestly, we know exactly what needs to be done by every peacekeeping stakeholder to make this improvement a reality. So why are the improvements that we are all calling for not happening faster than we see today? We also believe that we need the political commitments that are expressed in this very Chamber to transcend beyond these halls and materialize on the ground and in capitals.

Rwanda continues to play a critical role in peacekeeping and, as one of the top five troop- and police-contributing countries, with an unwavering commitment to the protections of civilians, today we will speak from that point of view. I would like to make eight brief points:

First, we need a unified understanding of the protection of civilians. This is an absolute prerequisite for the way forward. Having differing interpretations of the protection of civilians is dangerous, and we have witnessed its lethal consequences for civilians and peacekeepers alike. September will mark the nineteenth anniversary of the first mission with a protection of civilians mandate. We have had 19 years to debate its substance, so Rwanda really believes that it is time to agree on what the protection of civilians is, and move forward in a concerted manner.

The protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping is defined as using

> "all necessary means, up to and including the use of deadly force, aimed at preventing or responding to threats of physical violence against civilians, within capabilities and areas of operations, and without prejudice to the responsibility of the host Government".

The Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians provide further guidance on this and, as a country with peacekeepers, we apply them. We are happy to say that when they are applied, as we do, they are lifesaving.

Second, we need to bolster our support for the indispensable role police play in peacekeeping. We turn to our police officers when we seek the trust of local populations. We turn to them again when we seek to strengthen a country's rule of law. We turn to them when we seek long-term peace and stability that ward off a relapse into violent conflict. We therefore need to support them accordingly.

Third — and we understand that this is a tall order — the Secretariat should deploy only troops that are willing to robustly implement mission mandates and to be held accountable, both in the field and to their mission leaderships. When there is a failure to protect civilians, then we need accountability to apply. Accountability is very clear. Accountability does not lie only with the troops. It lies with the entire chain of command. But we need accountability to start being applied seriously if we are to improve peacekeeping operations. That will ensure that we have the best Blue Helmets serving on the ground. This is key, both for the operational and tactical success of peacekeeping missions and for the reputation of the United Nations

and the legacy it strives to leave behind. This is a collective reputation.

Fourth, we need to deploy more female peacekeepers. We have heard this point made a number of times this morning. We also emphasize this point, and we agree fully with those who made it earlier. Evidence shows that women increase the effectiveness of missions with a protection of civilians mandate, in particular the protection of women and children, who are more vulnerable to violence in situations of conflict. The victims of sexual and gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse also find it much easier to interact with female peacekeepers.

Fifth, we need the right capabilities and equipment to meet the challenges we face on the ground. That is an endeavour that cannot fall short of adapting to new technologies that modernize our ways.

Sixth, we need the right capabilities to provide our peacekeeping missions with reliable and accurate data, particularly in situational awareness, to inform all our operations. For this to happen, again, we know what to do. We know that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, the regional organizations and the field missions need to work much more closely together and exchange critical information in a timely manner. This is not just a matter of knowing what happens; it is the potential to significantly minimize threats, reduce casualties and keep our peacekeepers from serving blindly in the field.

Seventh, we need to deepen, institutionalize and operationalize our partnership with the African Union. We have been discussing this partnership for a few years now. Last year, we saw an important improvement through the framework that was entered into by the Secretary-General. We know what to do. We need now to institutionalize and operationalize this framework.

Lastly, we must remove the bureaucratic barriers that further bury us in age-old ways that hamper our ability to be nimble and flexible. The Secretary-General's efforts to reform the peace and security pillar target many of these pitfalls. Let us support him in this pursuit. Rwanda supports his efforts and will be more than happy to work with any other Member that would like to see improvements in peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, I would just like to say in a sobering manner: Let us stop talking about peacekeeping in an abstract manner. Peacekeeping is operational; it saves and protects real lives. We speak from our experience of a peacekeeping failure, but we also speak today from our experience of the success of peacekeeping operations. We have seen both sides of peacekeeping. So let us instead talk about what is and is not working on the ground. Let us talk about the specific effects it has on the women, children and men where armed conflicts are taking place. Let us talk about what we can do in each mission to minimize the violence towards civilians and protect them, and to minimize violence against our own peacekeepers.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): Let me express my gratitude to you, Madam President, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for organizing today's open debate on this important issue.

Serbia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, but I would like to make some comments in my national capacity.

The consequences of the increasing number of conflicts and interconnected crises are often far-reaching and fraught with social tensions and instability, resulting in threats and challenges that are ever more complex, uncertain and disruptive of the future. Peace has always been at the core of the Organization, but the complex nature of today's challenges calls for innovative ways of thinking and adjustments on the part of mechanisms and systems to find common solutions. To that end, we must strengthen multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, including by adapting its system to the needs of our time. We believe that peacekeeping operations are one of the key pillars and instruments for achieving the substantive role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

We believe that it is necessary to reform United Nations peacekeeping missions, as their mandates are much more diversified today and, in addition to conflict prevention and peacekeeping, include also post-conflict reconstruction and long-term development. After all, the multidimensional role of the missions — which, alongside their mandates to safeguard peace and protect civilians, contribute to political processes, the bolstering of security, the organization of elections, the protection and promotion of human rights and the re-establishment of the rule of law — is of paramount

importance for consolidating and maintaining lasting stability.

The mobilization of additional and concrete capacities is needed in order to improve mission activities in the field. Political and security conditions being in constant flux, we must make sure that the existing financial and human resources within the United Nations system are used in a timely and optimum way. We also agree that it is necessary to carry out further institutional reforms in order to improve missions' effectiveness and operability.

In this regard, the reform of the United Nations peacekeeping architecture, as proposed by Secretary-General Guterres, is an important step forward, and we welcome his comprehensive report on restructuring the United Nations peace and security pillar (A/72/525). Furthermore, we also welcome his efforts specifically in the field of conflict prevention, in the belief that a coherent approach and the strengthening of the institutional structure of the United Nations will create greater efficiency in addressing crises around the world.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate Serbia's commitment to the efforts of the United Nations aimed at promoting and maintaining international peace and security through active participation in the system of collective security. In that context, I recall that we have contributed in a concrete way to furthering global and regional security, maintaining our long-lasting tradition of participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Currently, around 330 Serbian personnel are deployed in five United Nations and four European Union peacekeeping missions, making Serbia the leading troop-contributing country in South-Eastern Europe and the tenth-largest European contributor. Our peacekeepers proudly fly the United Nations banner in Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cyprus, the Central African Republic and the Middle East.

In its commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Serbia is motivated also by the fact that it is a host country to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), deployed under resolution 1244 (1999). We have reiterated many times our staunch support for the activities of UNMIK in order to allow it to respond to all the demands mandated by the Security Council and to address ongoing and new challenges. In this regard, we have stressed the paramount importance of ensuring that Mission's needs for adequate human and financial resources are met in order to ensure its effectiveness and continuous active engagement.

Recent events in Kosovo and Metohija, including the unjustified arrest of a senior Serbian official and the chief negotiator with Pristina, as well as the 26 March brutal beating of innocent civilians by the so-called Kosovo Police Force, serve as yet another reminder of the numerous challenges and the overall very complex political and security situation in the province. Today's reality is a clarion call on us to maintain our focus on the quest for a compromise and sustainable solution to the issue of Kosovo and Metohija and to fully support not only preserving but also strengthening UNMIK's presence and activities on the ground, as it is absolutely essential to promoting and achieving stability.

In conclusion, we are all aware that the challenges are numerous, that security situation in many parts of the world is volatile, and that our continuous commitment and hard work are needed to address them, including those pertaining to peacekeeping. For its part, Serbia stands ready to make a contribution towards the achievement of these goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji.

Mr. Daunivalu (Fiji): Let me thank you, Madam President, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for organizing this open debate on peacekeeping operations.

We pay tribute to all United Nations peacekeepers, and particularly to those who have lost their lives in the service of global peace.

As a troop- and police-contributing country for around 40 years, Fiji takes great pride in its participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions. For a small island developing State, the Fijian men and women deployed to the various peacekeeping missions globally represent our contribution to the goal of achieving international peace and security, as stipulated under the Charter of the United Nations. I would like to make three key points as our contribution to the discussion on ways to collectively improve United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The first concerns adequate resources and support. We believe that there is a need to provide peacekeeping forces with adequate resources in order to deliver effectively on their mandate. We accept that targeted training, capacity-building and proper equipment

are vital to support United Nations peacekeepers in the various peacekeeping missions. While budgetary considerations are relevant, they should not be the primary factor for determining the participation of a country that provides peacekeepers to a mission. Indeed, it should not be relied upon at the expense of the lives of United Nations peacekeepers.

The lack of funding to support a United Nations peacekeeping mission also should not be used to disadvantage a troop- or police-contributing country. Rather, an overall review of the mission mandate should be the basis of determining the size, operation, focus and objectives of a mission. In this regard, we do not believe that independent mission reviews commissioned by the Secretary-General give the Secretariat a blanket approval or unilateral scope to determine the participation of a troop- or police-contributing country in a mission. As Member States and troop-contributing countries, we expect the Secretariat to provide us with options and recommendations that are holistic in nature and take into account the overall objectives of the mission and the interests of troop- and police-contributing countries.

Secondly, we underline the importance of an effective political process as a key factor in achieving the goal of a peacekeeping mission. This is essential in order to effectively resolve conflicts and bring a swift and successful conclusion to a peacekeeping mission. The important role that the Secretary-General plays in engaging with all parties to a conflict, and the efforts of regional and subregional organizations through dialogue, negotiations and national reconciliation, are all necessary to support peace operations.

Thirdly, as has already been mentioned today, peace is best pursued in partnership. Cooperation among the host country, Member States, troop- and police-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat is necessary. As a troop- and police-contributing country, we expect to be fully consulted by the Secretariat on the work that it does to support Member States and troop- or police-contributing countries in delivering on peacekeeping mandates, especially where it affects our ongoing participation in a mission. Host countries should also be consulted closely to ensure that any operational or strategic change in a mission does not hamper the swift achievement of peacekeeping goals for that mission.

I close by assuring members of the Council that Fiji will continue to work closely with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness and success of the Blue Helmets and United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate the Dutch presidency on its able leadership of the Security Council during the month of March and for its choice of this very important topic for our debate.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his valuable briefing this morning. I further thank Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, for his detailed statement, and Ms. Fatimata Touré.

The Sudan associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My country's delegation would like to express its deep appreciation for the peacekeepers who have sacrificed their lives to protect civilians and implement the noble mandate of achieving peace and stability throughout the world, particularly in our African continent, which hosts the greatest number of peacekeeping missions.

Cooperation with regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations is highly manifested in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which has been operational since 2008. In strong coordination with the African Union (AU), the Sudan and the United Nations, this joint mission participated in political mediation until the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur was achieved in 2011. This answers the question of how we can reach political solutions and uphold strategic cohesion.

Proceeding from our practical experience in Darfur, we affirm that the joint efforts that led to peace there and the gradual and smooth withdrawal of UNAMID from the Sudan, where the second phase will be concluded in June, resulted from the intensive work and strong political resolve of the Sudan and the unlimited support of the AU, the United Nations, the State of Qatar and other partners. This proves that the desired goals will never be achieved without the concerted

efforts of all stakeholders — be they national, regional or international — to maintain, build and sustain peace, particularly in the post-conflict phases of recovery and reconstruction, with stabilization and peacebuilding projects. In that regard, my delegation reaffirms the need for the international community at large to bring pressure to bear on all parties that refuse to join the peace process. It must deny them shelter and support, and instead push them towards peace so as to alleviate the suffering of those affected by war and to achieve comprehensive peace.

Allow me to provide some preliminary suggestions, based on our practical experience, on how to promote the work of peacekeeping missions in the future.

First, peacekeeping operations must be given appropriate mandates, which should be reviewed regularly in the light of developments on the ground. Second, appropriate training should be provided to peacekeepers, be they military, police or civilians. Third, partnership should be promoted among all stakeholders, particularly the host country, the United Nations — either through the Secretariat, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, the Security Council or the United Nations country team — other relevant regional and subregional organizations, and the troop- and police-contributing countries. Fourth, in light of the organic link between peace and development, we must strive to promote development in regions and countries that suffer from conflicts. Fifth, we should give greater priority to efforts to resolve conflicts by political means. In this vein, we support all reconciliation efforts, led by Secretary-General António Guterres, to focus on preventive diplomacy, mediation and reconciliation. Sixth, we should promote strategic partnerships between the United Nations and the AU in the field of peacekeeping. Seventh, we must design an exit strategy for the missions once the troops are deployed.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its commitment to cooperating with the United Nations, the African Union and all other partners in order to ensure a better future for peacekeeping operations, so that they can achieve the desired goals of maintaining international peace and security, protecting civilians and contributing to the reconstruction and development process.

The President: As this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of March, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the members of the Council, especially the Permanent Representatives and their respective staff, and to the secretariat of the Council for all the support they have given us.

Indeed, it has been a busy month and one in which we have rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as all relevant conference service officers, interpreters — who have done a tremendous job — and security staff. We are very grateful for all their tireless support, professionalism and flexibility. They are always there for us and we can always count on all of them, including the media services. It is really tremendous how many people are here to help the presidency do a good job. I offer them all a very heartfelt thank you.

As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of Peru good luck in the month of April.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.